

SALVATION THROUGH THE GRACE OF OUR SA-
VIOUR DISPLAYED,—THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE
ILLUSTRATED,—AND RIGHTEOUSNESS IN ALL
MANNER OF CONVERSATION RECOMMENDED,

I N
SEVERAL SERMONS,

P R E A C H E D

T O

THE ASSOCIATE CONGREGATION

O F

J E D B U R G H.

B Y

ALEXANDER SHANKS. *K*

EDINBURGH:

Printed for WILLIAM LAING,
BOOKSELLER, HEAD OF CANONGATE.

MDCCLXXXVII.

NAVIGATION THROUGH THE GACE OF GUTS
TO THE GACE OF GUTS—THEIR OWNERS GACE
A LOST GACE—AND HIGH TIDES IN ALL
MANNER OF CONVICTION RECOMMENDED

I N

SEVERAL SHIP MONS

T H E C L I F F

THE BRITISH MUSEUM



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S E R M O N I.

ACTS, xv. 11.

But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.

CERTAIN men from Judea maintained in Antioch, concerning the Gentiles, that except they were circumcised, after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved. This dangerous position, which arose from a misapprehension of the righteousness and grace of Christ, and tended to substitute, for the foundation of our hope, a quicksand, instead of the rock of salvation, was opposed with great zeal and firmness by Paul and Barnabas, apostles of the Gentiles. After no small dissention and disputation, that church referred the question to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, and appointed Paul and Barnabas, with some of its own members, to lay it before them.

When the commissioners from Antioch came to Jerusalem, some believers, who had been of the sect of the Pharisees, eagerly opposed them, and asserted, that it was necessary to circumcise believing Gentiles, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. The apostles and elders came, therefore, together to consider this matter; and, after a long and eager debate, Peter rose, and, in a nervous and pointed speech, supported with facts known to the whole assembly, showed, that it was
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unnecessary to lay upon Gentiles the yoke of ceremony; concluding with the words of the text: *But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.* Whether Gentiles, or Fathers, be the persons to whom the words, *even as they*, refer, is immaterial: The sense is, believing Jews who, as their fathers were, are circumcised, and believing Gentiles who are not circumcised, are saved equally, effectually, and certainly, through the grace of the same Lord Jesus Christ.

DOCTRINE, *Salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, is a truth which his apostles firmly believed, and boldly professed.*

We shall speak of the names of our Saviour;—of his grace;—of salvation through his grace;—of believing and professing this universally interesting truth.

The names given to our Saviour are to be considered first. To speak of these with the Bible before us is easy; but to speak as we ought to speak—to speak believingly and feelingly, is more than we can do of ourselves. Without the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit, speakers speak in vain, and hearers hear in vain. *First*, The glorious person through whose grace we are saved, is *Lord*. *Lord* is both his official and essential name. Tho' it be his official name which the text holds up to our view, it is not improper to observe, that he, who is *Lord* by office, is *Jehovah* by nature. To him Scripture ascribeth the name, and perfections, and works of *Jehovah*. *Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end**. Are

* Heb. i. 10. 11. 12.

you well affected to the Godhead of our Saviour? Pity the poor man who accounts it an uncertain and speculative notion. It is an immutable and operative truth; and exerts its influence in every part of our redemption. Were he not Lord, Jehovah, we could not believe in his blood for remission of sins: The blood of an innocent *man* cannot take away the sin of the world. Were he not Lord, Jehovah, we could not depend on his righteousness: The righteousness of a just *man* cannot justify the ungodly. Were he not Lord, Jehovah, we could not trust in his arm: The arm of a mighty *man* cannot save them that are without strength. Were he not Lord, Jehovah, we could not rejoice in his goodness: The riches of a good *man* cannot satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry soul with good things.

Lord, in the text, as we have said, is an official name, and given to our Saviour as ruler and governor over all. The angel who announced his birth to the shepherds of Bethlehem, called him, *Christ, the Lord* *. In his ministry he sometimes used it when speaking of himself: *Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee* †. The disciples honoured him with it, *Lord increase our faith* ‡; and he accepted it as homage due to him, *Ye call me Master, and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am* ||. To express the extent of his dominion, and the fulness of power committed to him, and to lay the foundation of our hope and trust, Scripture addeth to it distinctive epithets. He is *Lord of lords, Lord from heaven, Lord of the sabbath, Lord of the dead and living, Lord of glory, Lord of all*. These are not like the empty and high-sounding titles assumed by the princes of this world. They are expressions of his universal supremacy, which his people delight to

* Luke, ii. 11. † Mark, v. 19. ‡ Luke, xvii. 5. || John, xiii. 13.

recognise, and in which they rest with sensations of gratitude and joy. David called him, *my Lord*. Thomas said, *my Lord*. In the epistle to the Philippians Paul saith, *Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*. In the epistle to the Corinthians, the same apostle saith, *No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*. In the former, we are taught our duty; which is, to confess our Lord's dominion and authority: In the latter, our incapacity to perform it, without supernatural assistance, is discovered. Do we acknowledge the duty? and do we feel the incapacity? The questions are fair. I may preach, and you may hear these interesting truths; but, without the Spirit, we will neither glorify the Father, nor honour the Son, by believing and confessing them unto salvation.

The *second* official name in the text is *Jesus*; a name long and well known among his people. It answers to the Hebrew name *Jehoshua*; and signifies Jehovah the Saviour. A writer of great piety expresses this in a pleasant manner: "Let Arian "pride before him bow, He's Jesus and Jehovah "too" The angel who informed Joseph of his conception, and foretold his birth, commanded this name to be given to him, and assigned the reason of the name, *Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins* *. The sound and the favour of this excellent and everlasting name, have gone through the world, and filled people of all kindreds and tongues with wonder and joy. In the Old Testament he was known to be the Saviour of Israel; and Israel was saved in him with an everlasting salvation. In the New Testament he is known to be the Saviour of the world, and to be revealed to the world, that the world through him might be saved. Observe the

* Matth. i. 21.

difference. Salvation through his name was then revealed to Israel; and the joyful sound was not heard afar off. Salvation through his name is now revealed to the world; and the joyful sound heard in the ends of the earth, and the isles of the sea. *Jesus* is the name in which every knee must bow. Things in heaven, things in earth, things under the earth, should bow; and things that will not, shall be constrained to bow. *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.* Paul, writing in the Spirit, took these words from the 45th of Isaiah, applied them to our Saviour, and set them down in the 14th of the Romans. Compare the prophecy and its application; and you will see that the Saviour is both Jesus and Jehovah, from this, among other considerations, that he hath sworn by himself.—To smother the evidence of Messiahship, though born in Bethlehem, his despisers called him Jesus of Nazareth. Nathaniel stumbled at this; and having never heard, or having forgotten the glad tidings of great joy which had been published at Bethlehem, exclaimed, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth**. But Jesus, after he was ascended far above all heavens, triumphed in this mean appellation, and struck down with it one of the bitterest of his persecutors: *I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.* Jesus is a name which the Saviour will have his people to reverence on earth, now when he sits in heaven. One of the last speeches to John in Patmos, is introduced in this emphatic manner, *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things.* This glorious and everlasting name is a diadem of beauty, which will shine, from generation to generation, on earth; and, in heaven, will draw upon itself the eyes of confirmed angels and redeemed men, for ever and ever.

* John, i. 46.

Christ is the *third* name which appears in the text. *Iesus*, who is called *Christ*, is, according to his name, the anointed Saviour. Concerning this, Scripture is clear; and the words of prophets and apostles, like him of whom they spake and wrote, are full of grace and truth. *God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows* *. This passage is applied to *Christ* in the epistle to the Hebrews. Upon the stem of *Jesse* and the branch out of his roots, the Spirit of the Lord shall rest, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord †. This prophecy was fulfilled when the Spirit descended from heaven like a dove, and abode upon *Christ*. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ‡. From the prophecy of *Isaiah*, *Christ* read these words in the synagogue of Nazareth, and told his hearers that they were fulfilled in him. — Anointing is an ancient ceremony. The priests of the order of *Aaron* were anointed. *Elisha* the prophet was anointed. The kings of the house of *Israel* were anointed. — Official anointing is not an unmeaning ceremony. It was done by a mandate from Heaven; and gave assurance of a designation to an office, and of the conveyance of a spirit for the discharge of the duties of that office. After *David* was anointed, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward. No material oil was poured upon the Lord *Iesus*. Some pious women anointed his feet with ointment: He accepted and commended it, as a testimony of affection and gratitude. But this is not his official anointing. Though *Christ* was

* *Psal.* xlv. 7.† *Isa.* xi. 1. 2.‡ *Isa.* lxi. 1.

not anointed with material oil, he received what the ceremony signified. His God and Father invested him with the offices of prophet, priest, and king, and filled him with the Spirit to execute these offices. The Spirit is the oil of gladness. Giving him the Spirit is the anointing. And God even his Father is the anointer. *God, saith an apostle, anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power* *. How stand ye affected to the prophetic testimony, and the gospel interpretation of the anointing? Believe, and rejoice in these, O Christians. The offices of your Saviour are perfumed with the odour of the anointing; and all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. How sweet is the favour of his name! O that in speaking and hearing of it, we may know, and believe, and feel its excellence and use in Christianity! The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is the glory of sermons. Sermons in which his name, and truths connected with it, do not shine, though neatly composed and gracefully pronounced, are insipid and tasteless declamations. Preachers who preach themselves and moral philosophy, instead of Christ Jesus, the Lord, should come out of the pulpit, sit down to the Bible, and learn Christianity at the feet of prophets and apostles.

From the display we have made of the names of our Saviour, his excellence, sufficiency, and suitability, are obvious and interesting considerations. *First*, His excellence. In the Lord Jesus Christ there is an excellence, for which his people count all things loss; an essential, and an official excellence. His *essential* excellence is inexpressibly and inconceivably glorious. All the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily in him. The perfections of Jehovah are *his* properties. His power is omnipotent; his wisdom is unsearchable; his love passeth

* Acts, x. 38.

knowledge;

knowledge; and his presence is every where. His *official* excellence is unmeasurably high, and rises far above our thoughts, and our praises. Of God he is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. These are excellencies, with which none of the beauties of creation are worthy to be compared; and which, by believers and sufferers, have been confessed and praised in great extremities. A martyr*, when every finger was a firebrand, filled by these with all joy and peace in believing, cried till his voice failed, *None but Christ, none but Christ*. Christ is the excellent prophet, the excellent priest, the excellent king. In his personal and official excellence let the hearts of all who love him rejoice. Out of this river, which is full of water, flow the streams that make glad the city of God. *There*, cries the ancient church with the voice of one of her prophets, *will the glorious Lord be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams*†. Secondly, His sufficiency. Without the aid of any co-operator, the Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for the complete and everlasting salvation of his people. He is armed with power; clothed with authority; enriched with grace; filled with the Spirit; and girded with faithfulness. His sacrifice is sufficient to expiate our guilt; his righteousness to justify our persons; his blood to wash us from our sins; his power to subdue our corruptions, and defend us from our enemies; his goodness to supply our wants, and satisfy our souls; his love to kill our enmity, and reconcile and draw us to God; his mercy to relieve our miseries, and comfort our hearts; and his grace is sufficient to support us under our burdens, to succour us in our temptations, and to furnish us to every good work. The sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ is

* John Lambert, burnt in Smithfield 1538.

† Isa. xxxiii. 21.

incontrovertible.

incontrovertible. *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell* *. Thirdly, His suitability. The suitability of Christ must be estimated according to the necessities of sinners; and, when these are considered, it will appear that, in every respect, he is adapted and suited to our situation. Do we need life? Christ is come that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. Do we need light? Christ is the sun of righteousness, and the light of the world; and whosoever believeth in him shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. Do we need righteousness? Christ is the Lord our righteousness, and the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth. Do we need redemption? In Christ we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. He hath redeemed his people from the curse of the law; and given himself for them, that he might redeem them from all iniquity. Do we need holiness? Christ is made sanctification; and in him we are created unto good works. Do we need liberty? Christ is anointed to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Do we need health? Christ is the Lord our healer; and hath medicine for every disease, and balm to every wound. Do we need protection? Christ is our defence and refuge, our shield, our glory, the lifter up of our head. Do we need support and refreshment? Christ is the bread, and the water of life. Do we need redemption from death? Christ hath the keys of hell and of death. *Christ is all and in all* †.

Now, believers, our exhortation to you is, *first*, Lay up, and keep in the midst of your hearts, the names of the Saviour in whom ye believe. Till these be in it, the heart is unfurnished and desolate. The declarations made in Scripture, of his

* Col. i. 19.

† Col. iii. 11.

essential and official names, are the best subjects of meditation and thought, and the best subjects of conference and discourse among his people. They are, accordingly, represented as the people who mention his righteousness, and think on his name. A writer in the Psalms, designing to set before the sons of Korah the excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ, prefaceth his speech in this solemn manner: *My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer* *. Secondly, Be well-affected to the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. *My son*, said Paul to Timothy, *be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord* and, in the Revelation, the suffering remnant is represented as a seed who *keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*. Consider the solemnity and weight of the certification given by himself upon this subject. *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels* †. A testimony to his essential and official sufficiency, drew you out of the national body, and united you as a confessing and holy people. Be neither ashamed of it, nor ashamed unto it. Deny not the truths which it asserts; and slide not into the errors, in principle or practice, which it condemns. Be faithful; be steadfast; be immovable. Jesus Christ is not yea and nay, but the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. To see Christians grown into years, and covered with gray hairs, wheeling about, and, like children, tossed to and fro with every wind, running from party to party, though a common, is an unseemly sight. *Be not ye carried about with diverse and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing*

* Psal. xlv. 1.

† Mark, viii. 38.

that

that the heart be establisbed with grace *. Thirdly, Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Are you acquainted with this form of speaking and acting? To our acceptance his name is indispensably necessary. No word, nor deed, that is not spoken, or done, in the name of Christ, pleases God. Pray in the name of Christ; praise in his name, and hear in his name. Walking in it, is among the descriptions and promises of a godly conversation: *I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord* †. Resolutions to walk in it are formed and executed accordingly. *For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever* ‡. Fourthly, Remember his name. The best defence will be found in it against these restless enemies of our peace and comfort, desponding and vexing thoughts. A man who had been often troubled with them, relieved himself by this expedient: *I remembered thy judgments of old, and have comforted myself. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night* ||. When ye work, remember that Christ is the glory of your strength: When ye fight, remember that Christ is the captain of your salvation: When sin prevails, and testifies against you, remember that Christ is your propitiation and advocate: When ye hear the law saying, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things; remember that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, and hath redeemed us from its curse: When ye walk in darkness, remember that Christ is the sun of righteousness, and the light of the world: And, when ye shall come to the valley of the shadow of death, remember that Christ is the resurrection and the life, and hath the keys of hell and of death.

* Heb. xiii. 9. † Zech. x. 12. ‡ Mic. iv. 5. || Psal. cxix. 52. 55.

This display of the names of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his excellence, sufficiency, and suitableness, should collect and fix upon him every eye. But, alas! after all that is written, and spoken, and read, and heard of him, there have been, and there are men, who see not his beauty, and who despise his form. What shall we say? The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not. How great is that blindness which sees no glory, and perceives no excellence, in these everlasting names, Lord, Jesus, Christ! He who is, and will be, called by them, is to his people, and the world, all that they signify. Upon applications to the sovereign, whom the law makes the fountain of honour, he grants his royal licence to take the name and bear the honours of such a family. Jehovah, the fountain of our salvation-honours, hath authorised his righteous and faithful servant to take and to bear a new name; a name that is above every name; a name which the mouth of the Lord hath named, and which will fill the heaven of heavens with unceasing wonder and increasing praise for ever and ever. With this remunerative name you are unacquainted. The descriptions of it, which beautify and impart dignity and glory to the Bible, appear to you dull and empty declamations. Look again into the Bible, O despiser, and behold the light and energy with which the beauties and virtues of his new name are there expressed. *Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong. whom ye see and know †. By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man*

* Luke, xxiv 46. 47.

† Acts, iii. 16.

stand here before you whole. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father †. Now these things were written, and these things are preached, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through his name ‡. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life §. Ye may believe; for ye are called. Ye should believe; for ye are commanded. Ye must believe; for there is no life but through his name. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the only begotten Son of God **.*

May the Holy Spirit, by the word, give you the knowledge, work in you the faith, and plant in you the love, of his blessed and glorious name; enable you to confess, and preserve you always from denying it. In his name shall the Gentiles trust. Triumphant Saviour, they that know thy name will put their trust in thee. *From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, let thy glorious and everlasting name be great among the Gentiles; and incense, and a pure offering, in every place offered unto thy name; for thy name shall be great among the Heathen, and shall endure for ever, saith the Lord of hosts ††. Amen, and amen.*

* Acts, iv. 10 12.

† Phil ii. 8. 9. 10 11.

‡ John, xx. 31.

§ John, iii. 16.

** John, iii. 18.

†† Mal. i. 11.

S E R M O N II.

ACTS, xv. 11.

But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.

THE grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is a necessary and interesting theme of meditation and discourse. No opportunities or means of displaying its operations in our salvation, and of commending to sinners its excellence and beauty, should be neglected. In all that is written and spoken of it saints and sinners are nearly interested. To his grace *saints* are debtors for every thing they possess now, and all they hope to inherit hereafter. Without his grace none can be saved: and, since it reigns in salvation, and will not suffer works, as its rivals, to come near the throne, knowledge of its administration must be indispensably necessary to *sinners*.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, though indispensably necessary, and universally interesting, is a theme which is not agreeable to the general taste of mankind. Natural men are its enemies, and never hear salvation ascribed to it without disgust. To beat down high thoughts, which Scripture hath raised, of its superlative worth and unrivalled excellence, great expence of words and sounds has been laid out for pushing forward moral virtue, or works of the law, to contend with
the

the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to divide with it the honour of salvation and eternal life.

But vain are the enterprizes of men. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? In spite of enemies, visible and invisible, the fame of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is gone through the earth, heard in the ends of the world, and celebrated in ships and islands of the sea. Martyrs have sung of it in dungeons, sealed it on scaffolds, and praised it in flames. By it prisons have been opened, chains and fetters knocked off, and captives ransomed and set at liberty. Anointed and perfumed with it, synods and assemblies have framed edifying decrees, terminated controversies in the manifestation of the truth, and filled churches with consolation and joy. After a long and eager debate, Peter, who spake the faith of the apostles and elders, made this grave and honourable profession: *But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.*

The second head of discourse, which is *the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*, comes now before us. Looking into this rich and extensive field, every thing beautiful and magnificent in sacred imagery fills the eye with pleasure and the heart with desire: New wine pouring down from mountains; milk flowing from hills; honey dropping from rocks; water drawn out of wells of salvation; rivers of life clear as crystal; vines laden with grapes; the rose of Sharon full blown; mountains of myrrh; hills of frankincense; the tree of life in perfect verdure, and yielding fruit every month. Scripture, which opens the gate, and leads into this rich and aromatic garden, presents the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in the following

considerations, which saints will understand, believe, admire, and praise; and by which sinners may be reprov'd, correct'd, and instructed. Grace given unto Christ; — grace exercised by Christ; — grace working in Christ; — grace reigning by Christ; — and grace flowing from Christ.

First, Grace given unto Christ. A Psalm-writer, for the instruction of ministers of the ancient sanctuary, intending to display the excellence and preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, makes this address to him: *Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever* *. *Grace is poured into thy lips*—what doth this mean?—Giving him the word of grace, and anointing him to preach it unto men. The doctrine of grace was given unto Christ, or poured into his lips, and put into his heart. To the honour of his Father, this is acknowledged by himself: *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me* †. *The Father which sent me, he gave me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak* ‡. In the synagogue of Nazareth, when he read and expounded his commission from the prophecy of Isaiah, the grace in his lips and in his words extorted a testimony from the hearers, though they were not well-affected toward him. *All bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth* ||. He preached the word of grace, and preached it in a gracious manner. Officers sent to apprehend him, struck with the matter and manner of his discourses, returned without him, and made this singular apology for themselves, *Never man spake like this man* **. In word, in manner, and in power, the doctrine of Christ differed essentially from that which was commonly taught by the national preachers of his

* Psal. xlv. 2.

† John, vii. 16.

‡ John, xii. 49.

|| Luke, iv. 22.

** John, vii. 46.

day. The representation of it in one of the Psalms is beautiful and instructive : *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation : lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart : I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation : I have not concealed thy loving kindness, and thy truth from the great congregation* *.

Secondly, *Grace exercised by him.* The Lord Jesus Christ exercised grace in the highest and most perfect manner. He lived and died in the faith, trusting his Father for assistance, acceptance, and reward; and, for a joy which was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame. He loved the church, and gave himself for it; and honoured them who believed in him with his friendship and affection. He showed compassion to the miserable, opening the eyes of the blind, healing the diseases of the sick, supplying the wants of the needy, feeding the hungry with bread, and preaching the gospel to the poor. His meekness, and patience, and gentleness, O how exemplary ! The contradiction of sinners never ruffled nor discomposed his mind, nor raised his arm to inflict vengeance. The indiscretions of friends did not change his affections, nor provoke him to cast them off. He humbled himself, that we might be exalted; and became poor, that we might be enriched. His zeal was a fire that burned all day long, without kindling the world, or consuming his enemies. Application by two sons of thunder for fire was repulsed and rebuked : *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them* †. To him who appointed him he was faithful unto death, and performed all his engagements, crying on the cross, before he yielded up the ghost, *It is finished*. He submitted

* Psal. xl. 9. 10.

† Luke, ix. 54. 55.

and resigned himself to the pleasure and will of the Father: *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done.* He pleased not himself, sought not his own honour, did not his own will. Referring to the glory of the Father every thing either spoken or done, he entered on his sufferings with this solemn profession, *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* What shall we say to these things? Ye who have received abundance of grace, behold a pattern of exercise; the pattern in which nothing is superfluous, nothing defective, nothing exceptionable. Follow, O follow this pattern in your exercise and conduct. The Lord Jesus was Paul's example: *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* Follow him in faith and love; in gentleness and compassion; in meekness and patience; in zeal and faithfulness; in humility and self-denial; in submission and resignation. Christ is exemplary in all; and in all perfect. Perfection is out of our reach, but we may rise higher and come nearer it than we are at present; and the nearer we approach to perfection, our likeness to Christ will be more expressive; and likeness to Christ, increasing as it advances in the exercise of grace, is preparation and meetness for beholding and enjoying his glory.

Thirdly, Grace working in Christ. In this consideration are truths which command the faith and admiration of his people; and the passages of Scripture in which these are revealed, smell stronger and sweeter than beds of spices and lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. Grace wrought in the Lord Jesus Christ; and moved engagements with his Father, for delivering, to the praise of his glory, a select body of mankind out of the state of sin

fin and misery; and, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, bringing them to life, and honour, and immortality. The operation of his grace and love is early, and cannot be antedated. Before his elect were born, before the heavens were spread out, before the mountains were brought forth, or the foundation of the earth was laid, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ was in motion and operation. *Thy goings forth, O thou who art altogether lovely and gracious, have been from of old from everlasting* *. — Grace wrought; and made a discovery of Christ in paradise, to man fallen into sin and misery. The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, are words which, like him of whom they were spoken, are full of grace and truth. How pleasant was the dawning of the day of grace, when it appeared like a morning spread upon the mountains! and how glorious was the rising of the sun of righteousness, whose beams, breaking through the clouds collected over the world, fell upon the spot where the offence entered and abounded, and where the enemy tempted, destroyed, and triumphed! Alleluia, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Inconceivable were the rejoicings of the Lord Jesus Christ on that day, before his Father, in the habitable parts of his earth; and the delights which he felt with the sons of men. — Grace wrought; and set forth prefigurations of itself, which, though veils and shadows, were true representations of the unsearchable riches and fulness of Christ. Altars and sacrifices, the ark, the mercy-seat, the tabernacle, the temple, the cherubim of glory with their wings, were they useless and pompous lumber? No. These holy things were visible and material grace; sensible exhibitions of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was then,

* Mic. v. 2.

what he is now, and will be for ever, the only begotten of the Father, and full of grace and truth. — Grace wrought; and anointed prophets to foretel and preach the grace that should be brought unto us, at the revelation and manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ in our nature. How fluently and warmly did these holy men speak; how copiously and correctly did they write; and how feelingly and clearly did they testify of Christ, and the exceeding riches of his grace! *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, who was in them, did signify, when he testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them who have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven* *. — Grace wrought; and brought him forth in the fulness of time, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Look to him in the manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes; and behold his grace. Look to him in Jordan, where he was baptized; and behold him full of grace and truth. Behold him in the wilderness, where he was tempted; and admire his grace. Behold him on the mountains of Israel, offering up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears; and praise his grace. Behold him feeding the hungry and raising the dead, treading on the waves of the sea, and, in the likeness of a country-man, travelling from village to village, healing the sick, casting out devils, and preaching the gospel to the poor; behold him sweating in Gethsemane, mocked in the

* 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12.

place of judgement, buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, nailed to a tree, crucified on Calvary, and rising on the third day through the blood of the everlasting covenant; and believe and commend the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. — Grace wrought when he ascended, and shed down the Holy Ghost. By the gifts which Christ received for men, and the grace which he communicated to them, apostles and ministers of the New Testament were qualified for operations among his enemies, of which the exceeding riches of his grace had all the merit of success and victory. With these arms, the fishermen of Galilee assailed boldly and successfully the fortresses of error and idolatry; and brought in captives by tens, and by fifties, and by hundreds, and by thousands, to the knowledge and love of the truth, to the faith and obedience of Christ. So strong were their convictions, that it was by the power of his grace they conquered and triumphed; that they used the term *grace* in great latitude, and took from it a designation to their office, calling it *this grace*: *To me, saith Paul, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ* *. Great was that day of Jezreel, in which the sound and the fame of the operations of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ went abroad; and, from the deserts of Arabia, the cities of Asia, and the islands of Greece; from the wilds of Illyricum, the plains of Babylon, and even the hills of Rome, raised songs, *Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ*. — Grace is still working; and giving gifts, qualifying men to preach Christ, for the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of his body. Nor will the operations of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ deter-

* Eph. iii. 9.

mine and cease, till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Nay rather, these operations shall never cease, but be prolonged beyond the end of time, and lengthened out as the days of eternity.

Fourthly, Grace abounding and reigning by him. Where sin abounded, saith Scripture, grace did much more abound; That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.* Abounding and reigning are strong words. What do they mean? *Abundance of grace; and the power and splendour of that abundance.* By the Lord Jesus Christ, there is an abundance of grace to satisfy and supply all our need. He hath grace, and a fulness of grace. All in his fulness is grace; and all grace is in his fulness; and all that is received out of his fulness is grace. We are not playing upon words, nor amusing men with variations of sound. Christians in deed and in truth, ye know that these things are so. Righteousness, which justifies you, is in his fulness; and this is grace. Adoption, which makes you sons and heirs, is in his fulness; and this is grace. Holiness, which beautifies you, is in his fulness; and this is grace. Power, which preserves you, is in his fulness; and this is grace. Victory, in which you conquer, is in his fulness; and this is grace. Redemption, which having bought you up from the curse, will ransom you from the grave, is in his fulness; and this is grace. Eternal life, which is your inheritance and your hope, is in his fulness; and this is grace. Grace abounding by Jesus Christ, not only reinstates sinners in honours forfeited and lost by disobedience, but raises them in-

* Rom. v. 20, 21.

conceivably

conceivably higher, and places them nearer God, than they could have come by the commandment which was ordained to life. *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall, not simply live, but reign in life by one Jesus Christ*.* I am come, saith he, *that they might have life, and have it more abundantly†.*—By the Lord Jesus Christ the power of grace exerts itself, and triumphs in our redemption and salvation. From grace, motives and means derive efficacy and success. Through it, the word is mighty to carry and demolish strong-holds, where his elect have entrenched themselves; to overcome their resistance; and to persuade, allure, determine, and enable them to surrender and submit themselves to his reign. Unless Christ had interposed, sin and death would have reigned without controul, and without end. But, through his righteousness, these are both destroyed; and grace rises to the dignity of a sovereign and reigning power, and gives efficacy to institutions, for the complete and everlasting salvation of his people. Amazing system! Sing, O heavens; be joyful, O earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein.—The *splendour* of grace is by the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is not seated in the throne, nor invested with the majesty and state of a reigning power, by illegal and clandestine means. The honour and holiness of the law of works are displayed and established in its ascent. By a flight of steps, which magnifies and makes the law honourable, and which, with every solemnity, satisfies and glorifies the justice of heaven, grace ascended the throne, where, through righteousness, it reigns unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. *Christ was made sin for us, that, to the praise of the glory*

* Rom. v. 17.

† John, x. 10.

of his grace, we might be made the righteousness of God in him *. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us †; and is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth ‡. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus §.

Fifthly, Grace flowing from him. The Lord Jesus Christ is the glorious receiver of grace. It pleased the Father that a fulness of it should dwell in him; and dwell in him for this very purpose, that it might be honourably and seasonably communicated. All that flows out of his fulness is grace. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace: for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. From the Lord Jesus Christ, to his elect and redeemed, flows a broad and never-failing stream of grace, which the cold of winter cannot freeze, nor the heat of summer dry up. In its course it receives designations from effects; and is called enlightening grace, justifying grace, sanctifying grace, quickening grace, comforting grace, sealing and confirming grace. But all is grace of the same fulness; or water of the same river, which is sweeter than the brooks of honey, and more precious than the rivers of oil. Eternal life, the sum-total of gracious communications, is grace which was given us in Christ before the world began, and grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. *If any man thirst, ye know who is*

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

† Rom. x. 4.

‡ Gal. iii. 13.

§ Rom. iii. 24. 25. 26.

crying,

crying, *let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water* *.

From the account we have given of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, its excellence, suitableness, freeness, and sufficiency, are apparent. First, *Its excellence.* Compared with it all things are but loss in the estimation of his people, who ascribe to grace, the fame and glory of every thing in them that is excellent and worthy of praise. Are they clothed with righteousness, through which grace reigns? the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ wrought it, and put it on them. Are they children and heirs of God? his grace raised them to the honour of sons and daughters. Are they conformed to the image of his Son? his grace drew the lineaments, and gave their likeness all its polish. Are they supported? his grace strengthens and upholds them. Are they conquerors? his grace defeats the enemy and wins the victory. Since things are so, their exercise, which is distinguishing and peculiar to themselves, is exercise of grace. Praising, admiring, extolling the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; trusting, hoping, rejoicing, boasting, and triumphing in his grace, are *recreations* in which they delight; *amusements* by which they divert or fray away desponding and vexing thoughts, these vultures and tormentors of the soul; *reasonable services* with which they glorify him who loved them, and gave himself for them; and *instituted means* of receiving and enjoying anointings of the Spirit, which are indispensably necessary in the way of holiness. Secondly, *The suitableness* of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. When he was set up and furnished from everlasting, their necessities who were to be saved were foreseen, and provision made for them in his fulness. His grace hath in it all

* John, vii. 37. 38.

the powers of redeeming, calling, quickening, justifying, sanctifying, and saving. Are ye without life? the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ hath the power of quickening and raising the dead. Are ye without light? his grace hath the power of enlightening the eyes of the understanding, and giving sight to the blind. Are ye without righteousness? his grace hath the power of making you the righteousness of God in him. Are ye without holiness? his grace hath the power of washing and sanctifying you. Be the circumstances of his people ever so diversified, his grace is suited to them. Are they in adversity? it will keep them trusting: are they in prosperity? it will keep them humble: are they in fire? it will preserve them from burning: are they in water? it will preserve them from drowning. Poor natural man! this is all too high for thee. Are they hungry? it will feed them: are they thirsty? it will refresh them: are they cold? it will warm them: or sick? it will heal them: or weak? it will strengthen them: or poor? it will enrich them. Thirdly, *The freeness* of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe and confess its freeness. Were it not free, it could not answer your necessities; for you have neither money nor merit. Freeness is essential to grace. That which is not free may be good; but it cannot be grace. Scripture always supposeth, and, because we are naturally fond of merit, sometimes expresseth freedom in grace: *Being justified freely by his grace.* To the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we have free and ready access; and are exhorted to take freely, or buy without money: *Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* Behold it abounding in Corinth, where sin abounded. The most dissolute in that dissolute city, bought without money, or took freely the water of life; and O the monstrous filthiness which the river, w en
it

it broke in among them, swept away: *Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* Rich! reigning! triumphant grace! Fourthly, The *sufficiency* of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. To this his own testimony is express: *My grace is sufficient for thee.* Paul believed it, and triumphed; and so ought we. No burden is so heavy, but his grace is sufficient to sustain; no temptation so violent, but his grace is sufficient to resist; no work so difficult, but his grace is sufficient to perform; no corruption so malignant, but his grace is sufficient to mortify; no enemy so strong, but his grace is sufficient to overcome; no heart so hard, but his grace is sufficient to soften; no plague so inveterate, but his grace is sufficient to heal; no stain so deep, but his grace is sufficient to take out. Believers, ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that these are its praises. The preciousness of Christ to them that believe, words are not sufficient to express. Bundles of myrrh, and clusters of camphire, and beds of spices in the aromatic gardens of the east; the gold of Havilah, the beryl, the sapphire; the pillars of marble, the glory of Lebanon, and the temple of Solomon, are efforts of language to paint his beauty, to express his worth, and to articulate his praise. Many beauties are worthy of admiration, and entitled to praise; but the Lord Jesus Christ is the chiefest among ten thousand, and excelleth them all. Cast your eyes, ye that have eyes; cast them backward and forward, from everlasting to everlasting: consider him who was, and is, and is to come: behold him in the bosom of the Father, and the bowels of a woman; in the form of God, and the fashion of man: look at him in the manger, where he lay; the garden, where he was in an agony; the hall, where he was condemned; the cross,

where he died; the sepulchre, where he slept; and the throne, in the midst of which he at this moment liveth, and sitteth, and reigneth. After a survey of an object of contemplation and complacency so amazing and diversified, you will settle where eloquence of wisdom and excellency of speech ended: *Yea, he is altogether lovely.*

A person immensely great, inexpressibly beautiful, inconceivably precious, and, with respect to the dearest interests of men, indispensably necessary; a person whose works are meritorious, whose sufferings are satisfactory, whose riches are unsearchable, whose fulness is inexhaustible, whose love passeth knowledge, and whose memorial is from generation to generation; should, we think, draw upon himself every eye, and fix upon himself every heart. Alas! it is not so. Self-interest, an instinctive, and, in affairs of this life, a commanding power, with respect to the things of the Lord Jesus Christ, is dismounted, enervated, perverted by the flesh, the world, and the devil. When the Lord our righteousness is set forth in the glory of his Godhead, and the beauty of his office, and summons given, *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth*, multitudes, multitudes close their eyes, and hide their face; turn the back, and go away. A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servants at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife; and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master
of

of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For, I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. Behold the goodness, and severity; the grace, and justice, of the Master of the house!

Despisers and refusers of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, your situation is alarming; and all that have received it are in pain for your souls. The evening of life, which is not distant, will be the evening of your day of grace and means. What is to follow? Consequences awfully serious. The fulness of Christ, which is now open, will be shut up; and the door of faith, at which ye now refuse to enter, barred against you for ever. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door; and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. Bring forth the blind people, that have eyes; and the deaf, that have ears. Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Is the person of Christ, in your sentiments, still without glory, his office without form, and his grace without preciousness? Is his righteousness no ground of trust, his love no subject of praise, nor the day of his wrath an object of apprehension and terror? What

blindness! what hardness! But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. The sun of righteousness, who is the light of the world, is shining; and you are living in darkness, and will not open your eyes to behold him. Your sentiments concerning sin and holiness, law and gospel, works and grace, God and Christ, are all erroneous; and a total change, in sentiment and conduct, must be effected, or you are lost for ever. O blind and deluded creature, sit down to the Bible. All that is written of the person, and office, and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is true, and written for your learning. That eternal life is given in him to men, is the record of God. Thousands have believed it a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance. Before rejecting the faith of God's elect, and signing a dissent, read, reconsider, and examine. And, while you read, may God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. This will bring on a change of sentiment and conduct; and unite you in the faith with them, who believed and professed, that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, they would be saved. Amen.

SER.

S E R M O N III.

ACTS, xv. 11.

But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.

IN the sacred dialect, salvation is a term which hath been long used. With it Job and Jacob solemnised their devotions. *He also shall be my salvation*, said the former, in circumstances apparently hopeless. The latter, on his death-bed, makes this profession, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*. Moses used it at the Red sea and in the land of Moab. In one of the darkest periods it was revived by the mother of Samuel; and, from the day in which the Holy Ghost put the pen into the hand of David, few terms are so frequently used. Word of salvation, way of salvation, work of salvation, wells of salvation, voice of salvation, cup of salvation, day of salvation, God of salvation, joy of salvation, hope of salvation, helmet of salvation, shield of salvation, rock of salvation, Captain of salvation, chariots of salvation, tower of salvation, garments of salvation, horn of salvation, gospel of salvation, are modes of expression which raise and beautify the style of Inspiration, and give serious readers fresh and ever-flowing joy.

Unto the perishing and the lost, salvation is good news. Few, notwithstanding, believe them. The most

most part hear them as if they were untrue; or as persons who have no concern in their truth. Salvation is revealed, as a truth to be believed; and brought near, as a gift to be received. The command to believe, and the invitation to receive, are of the same extent; and both are expressed in universal terms. It is, therefore, extremely affecting to the serious, and deeply regretted by them every day, that the command to believe is not obeyed, and the invitation to receive not accepted, by all who are honoured with the latter, and bound by the former.

The report of salvation, however, hath been, and will be believed, and the gift of it received by as many as were ordained to eternal life. When the apostles and elders were assembled at Jerusalem, Peter concluded his speech with this grave and solemn profession, which was the faith of the whole church, *We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.*

The *third* head of discourse is now to come under consideration. After a display of the grace, and of the name of our Saviour, it is of essential importance to our interest, to have clear and extensive views of the nature of that salvation which is through his grace and name. In order that ye may apprehend this more clearly and extensively, we shall set before you its designations, blessings, means, and medium; and, while we speak and hear, may the Spirit of the Lord work mightily, and enable us to understand and believe what we speak and hear.

We shall begin with the *designations*. These are numerous; and open wells, out of which the thirsty draw water and receive instruction with joy. Salvation is designed *life*. By the entrance of sin, which

which is the transgression of the law, life was forfeited and lost. Sin reigned and reigns, and will reign unto death. By the curse, which denounces death upon every transgressor, the entail in the commandment ordained to life is cut off. But, saith our Saviour, *I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.* Tree of life, bread of life, water of life, resurrection and life, are descriptions of him, with reference to this great and comprehensive blessing; and, to express more strongly his efficiency in procuring it for us, bestowing it upon us, and maintaining it in us, he is called *our life*. The life which Christ is to his people, is not simply *living with him*, but *reigning in life by him*; nor is it reigning a number of years, greater or smaller. Of the years of his reign in life, and of their reign in life, there shall be no end. *In hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie promised before the world began.* — Salvation is designed *redemption*. In both Testaments, Scripture holds up this consideration of it to the world. *With the Lord there is plenteous redemption; and he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities* *. *God sent forth his Son, to redeem them that were under the law* †. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law* ‡. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins* §. Fix the eye, O hearers, on this object of contemplation and desire. Turn it round and round. View it on every side. Redemption from the curse; redemption from iniquity; redemption from death; redemption through blood more precious than gold, and by power which no enemy can resist! Is the eye of the understanding fixing, and the thoughts of the heart collecting and dwelling on this beautiful and alluring designation of our salvation? In praising it, spirits of just men employ their harps; and

* Psal. cxxx. 7. 8. † Gal. iv. 4. ‡ Gal. iii. 13. § Eph. i. 7.

sing,

sing, O heavens; be joyful, O earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel *. — Salvation is designed deliverance. Speaking of Jesus to the Thessalonians, the apostle saith, *Who delivered us from the wrath to come*; and of the Father to the Colossians, *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*. In the beginning of the gospel of Luke, the term *delivered* is used by Zacharias; *That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him, without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life*: And Joel, prophesying of the same great salvation, uses the same expressive term, *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call*. Glorious deliverance! deliverance from Satan, the worst and strongest enemy; from sin, the greatest and most pernicious evil; from this present world, the seat and throne of slavery; and from wrath to come, the essence of everlasting misery! — But the designation of this great and comprehensive blessing most commonly used, is *salvation*; a term, in this application of it, derived from the name and office of the Lord Jesus Christ: *Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins*. To save that which is lost, is acknowledged by himself to be the intention of his coming into the world. The plan of this salvation, which had been laid in the heaven from everlasting, was hid in God, till a discovery of it was made in paradise, where the man sinned, and by his disobedience made us sinners. Upon the promise of the seed of the woman, hope of salvation rested. Abraham saw the

* Isa. xliv. 23.

day of Christ; Jacob waited, and David longed for salvation: Prophets enquired diligently; Simeon saw with his eyes, and wished to die with the author of salvation in his arms. The knowledge of it was long confined to Israel: but, soon after Christ sat down on the right-hand of God, Gentiles were enriched with this knowledge; and now all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.—This salvation is *everlasting*: *Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation* *. The plan was laid, and the Saviour set up; the persons were chosen, the means appointed, and the kingdom prepared before the mountains were settled, or the hills brought forth: and, after the mountains are departed and the hills removed, salvation will be a shining monument of divine wisdom and love, and add splendour unto the glory of eternity. *Lift up your eyes unto the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they who dwell therein shall die like the insect: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished* †. — This salvation is great. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him* ‡? The evils from which salvation delivers are great and numerous; the blessings which it bestows are great and valuable; the promises in which it is made known and brought near, are great and precious; the price which purchased it is great and costly; the power which applies it is great and gracious; and the author and finisher of it is the great God our Saviour. — This salvation is complete. In no part is it defective; and nothing in it is superfluous and redundant: *Ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power* §.

* Isa. xlv. 17. † Isa. li. 6. ‡ Heb. ii. 3. § Col. ii. 10.

In Christ all who believe are completely justified; and by him they will be completely sanctified. When they shall be completely sanctified, their salvation will be completed. Salvation, in every consideration, is adapted to the miseries and necessities of perishing men; and is a mean perfectly fitted to its end. The Lord Jesus, who has accomplished it, is invested with offices, relations, and powers, and of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. In him we are *filled with all the fulness of God* *. — This salvation is *free*. We are saved by grace, and through grace, and to the praise of the glory of grace. The great object in the contemplation of divine wisdom and love, when the plan of salvation was concerted, and the means of executing it were appointed, was the demonstration of *the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus* †

Secondly, *blessings* in salvation. The blessings are excellent and precious. Salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is a tree of life and knowledge; and all its fruit is pleasant to the eye, nourishing to the soul, and much to be desired to make the foolish wise. Looking up to it, the Apostle breaks forth into this solemn thanksgiving, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings* ‡. As the blessings in salvation are among the riches of Christ, and highly esteemed by his people, the following collection of these, though it be incomplete, is worthy of attention. *Union with Christ* in effectual calling. Betrothed, espoused, married, joined to the Lord, are metaphors and expressions of a spiritual connection or union, which is known and believed to be real, firm, and indissoluble. *And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will be-*

* Eph. iii. 19. † Eph. ii. 7. ‡ Eph. i. 3.

troth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgement, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God †.—Pardon. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity ‡. Sensible of its value, and feeling the obligation to gratitude, David says in another Psalm, Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities §. How gracious are the terms in which promises of it are expressed! I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them **. Can you read these, and words like these, without crying, Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage ††?*

Acceptance. By the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, through which grace reigns unto eternal life, the chosen and redeemed are made righteous before God, and accepted in the beloved. In this glorious robe they come into the presence of the most High with confidence and joy. No enemy is able to hinder them; no-law hath any thing to lay to their charge. Justice to the Lord our righteousness introduces them, and insists for the acceptance of their persons. God is just in justifying them; and faithful in promising, Their gifts and offerings shall come up with acceptance upon mine altar ‡‡.—

* Hof. ii. 19. 20.

† Rom. vii. 4.

‡ Psal. xxii. 1. 2.

§ Psal. ciii. 2. 3.

** Jer. xxxiii. 8. 9.

†† Mic. vii. 18.

‡‡ Isa. lx. 7.

Reconciliation. You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled *. If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life †. On these precious words fix your thoughts, and feed your souls, O hearers. The heart must be colder than ice, and harder than stone, which is not warmed and melted by the loving-kindness breaking forth in them toward men. Enemies, enemies in arms against the Sovereign, reconciled to the praise of the glory of all his perfections! reconciled by the indignities, and blood, and death of his Son! and when reconciled, saved by his life! *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men ‡.*

Adoption. I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty §. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God **. Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are not only saved from destruction, but raised to honour. Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Sanctification. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ ††. God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth ‡‡. Sanctification is not only a blessing in salvation, but a blessing unto which all blessings in it are subservient. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it: that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such

* Col. i. 21. † Rom. v. 10. ‡ Luke, ii. 14. § 2 Cor. vi. 18.
 ** 1 John, iii. 1. †† 1 Pet. i. 2. ‡‡ 1 Thess. ii. 13.

thing : Gave himself for us; that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works †. To sinners sanctification is a blessing of immense value and absolute necessity. Without holiness no man can; and no man shall see the Lord. Christ prayed for it when he was on earth, and it is the subject of his intercession now that he is in heaven. Holiness is the original beauty of the human nature, and the restoration of it its everlasting glory. In the present state none are perfected; but partakers are pressing forward to perfection, and, when Christ appears without sin unto salvation, shall be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*

Perseverance. He that endureth to the end shall be saved ‡. The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger ||. In obedience and holiness, the path of the just is as the light of the morning, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. It must be so. Communication with the head of the spiritual body is never cut off. His spirit in them is a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Influence, influence sanctifying, confirming, sealing, is incessant rain and perpetual dew. Falling in summer, and in winter, and every day of the year, trees of righteousness in the garden of the Lord never wither, but bring forth fruit in old age. Receiving of the fulness of Christ grace for grace daily, and daily re-acting it to the glory of God through him, in endeavours after new obedience, they strike their roots deep, and raise their heads high. Standing firm and looking diligently, they defy death and life, height and depth, angels, principalities, and powers, things present and things to come, to separate them from the love of God which

* Eph. v. 25. 26. 27.

† Tit. ii. 14.

‡ Matth. x. 22.

|| Job, xvii. 9.

is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand* *.

Death in the Lord. I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, *Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them* †. Death is in the inventory of our privileges by Christ Jesus. After placing it among these, Paul looks at it, and cries, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord* ‡. Halt a moment, O passenger: look at the man dying in the Lord. While the enemy is carrying one out-work after another, and advancing sternly to the fountain, while the body is shivering and sweating, and every joint is writhed, and every feature distorted, he enjoys his vital union with the resurrection and the life; and, with one eye on the grave, and the other fixed on heaven, gives up the ghost in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his* §.

Resurrection to life. Every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, I will raise up at the last day **. What Christ promises, he is faithful and able to perform. *As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth: even so the Son quickeneth whom he will* ††. Those who are fallen asleep in Christ, though worms have destroyed their bodies, are not perished. Christ is risen from the dead, and in Christ shall all

* John, x. 28. 29.

† Rev. xiv. 13.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 22.—xv. 55. 56. 57.

§ Num. xxiii. 10.

** John, vi. 42.

†† John, v. 21.

be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming. By the resurrection of Christ from the dead, we are begotten again unto the lively hope of being planted together in the likeness of his resurrection, as we have been in the likeness of his death. The power of his resurrection exerts itself backward and forward; backward to the day on which death began to reign, and forward to the day on which it will be destroyed. Job felt it, sitting among the ashes; and David, when the crown was falling from his head. By it Paul's chains became easy and honourable; and where is the martyr or righteous man whom it hath not made glad. The redemption of our body is our hope; and none who wait for it shall be ashamed. I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes †.*

Honour in the day of Christ. When he descends from heaven to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe; they will be caught up in clouds to meet him in the air, and seated on his right-hand, the place of state and honour. Robed in his righteousness, shining in beauties of holiness, and fashioned like unto his glorious body, they will hear themselves absolved in the presence of accusers, their good works acknowledged and accepted, calumny flung upon their memory thrown in the face of the calumniators, their nobility raised, and all the sons of God made kings and priests unto God and his Father. Glorious day! Hasten it, Lord; but first make us ready. Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus ‡.

Invitation to the kingdom. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

* 1 Cor. xv. 20. 21. 22. 23. † Hos. xiii. 14. ‡ Rev. xxii. 20.

*foundation of the world**. How these gracious words will strike the ears of that shining assembly, is at present inconceivable; but they will be spoken and heard; spoken by the King, and heard by every heir of the kingdom. Without hiding the majesty of his Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ will be that day in the pomp and glory of his ministerial power. Agreeably to this consideration, the blessedness of the redeemed and saved millions, is represented flowing from the love and goodness of the Father. Come, ye blessed of my Father. The kingdom is an inheritance. Possession is on the foot of grace, and obtained through righteousness not of their working. All is ready. The kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world, and they are now meet for inheriting; being without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. The title-deed is made out, and sustained by the law. The righteousness of Christ upon them makes good their claim. The image of Christ in them proves and perfects their meetness, and all now before them is inheriting.

The glory of eternal life. All our present powers of description are insufficient to make an adequate representation of the blessedness and honours of heaven. Palms and prizes, crowns, kingdoms, and thrones; suns that never go down, moons that are unchangeable, stars for ever and ever; a city of gold, walls of jasper, and streets of transparent glass, are metaphors and shadows; but *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*†. These are blessings of salvation.

Thirdly, *Means.* The mean of revealing, the mean of receiving and enjoying, and the means of sealing and confirming our salvation.—The mean of revealing and making salvation known is the

* Math. xxv. 34.

† 1 Cor. ii. 9.

word read, preached, and heard. The word of this salvation is inspired, written, and attested by the Holy Ghost, and laid before the world in the Scriptures. In these holy writings, Christ, with his salvation, is revealed, and brought near to the perishing and the lost; and according to the commandment of the everlasting God, every one is bound to read, and hear, and understand, and believe what is written of Christ, and salvation through his grace. *Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness. Behold, I bring near my righteousness: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory**. Salvation, observe, is not only revealed, and set within sight of the eye, as an object of contemplation; but brought near, and placed within reach of the hand, as a blessing to be received. *The righteousness which is of faith, having powers of speech attributed to it, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? to bring Christ down from above. Or, Who shall descend into the deep? to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart: that is the word of faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation†*. Reading and preaching the word of salvation are instituted and prescribed uses of the mean. The God of our salvation hath not only fixed upon the mean, but instructed us in the use of that mean. Preaching makes no new revelation, and says nothing of Christ, and salvation through his grace, which is not written in the book of the Lord. The wisdom of God hath,

* Isa. xlii. 12. 13.

† Rom. x. 6—10.

notwithstanding,

notwithstanding, made the use of it duty, and honoured his institution with amazing success. *For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe* *. The honour of success is not from the piety of men, nor from powers of persuasion any of them possess and exert; neither is it from efficacy inherent in the institution itself; no, nor even in the word which is preached; but from the presence and power of the Spirit of the Lord. *They that were scattered abroad preached the word. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord* †. *Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance* ‡.

The mean of receiving and enjoying salvation is faith, which worketh by love. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. We are justified by faith. We are children of God by faith. We are sanctified through faith. By faith, we receive Christ Jesus the Lord, live, and stand, and walk; and through faith we are kept and saved. Salvation, as hath been observed, is set before us as a blessing to be received; and faith, which is a work of God in us, and a gift of God to us, is the mean, instrument, or hand, by which we receive the blessing of salvation. All his appointments are made in wisdom, and wisdom is conspicuous in this. The mean is fitted to the end. The praise of the glory of his grace is the end of salvation. To attain this great end, which in every consideration is worthy of God, he ordained faith to be the mean of receiving and possessing salvation. Why did he so? The question is not altogether fair. It should rather be, hath he done so? If it be upon record that he hath done so, we must believe that he did so in wisdom and prudence, tho'

* 1 Cor. i. 21.

† Acts, xi. 21.

‡ 1 Thess. i. 5.

his motive were a secret. But such is his compassion to the ignorant, and condescension to the weak, that he hath both ascertained the institution of the mean, and avowed the motive of institution: *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace* *. In the administration of grace, working salvation, and receiving salvation, are separate provinces. Working belongs to the Saviour, and receiving to the sinner. Every attempt to unite these, is a refinement upon the wisdom of God by the foolishness of man, and is threatened with resentment and punishment. To keep the provinces separate, as discretion hath laid them out, and prevent invasion on the honour of our Saviour, faith is the instituted mean of receiving and possessing the blessings of salvation; and, in the manner of Scripture on a distinct part of the same subject, we say, If salvation be by faith, it is no more of works, otherwise faith is no more faith: But if it be of works, then is it no more faith, otherwise work is no more work †.

The means of sealing and confirming salvation, are ordinances appointed to that end. Baptism and the Lord's supper are sealing and confirming means; not from powers in themselves, nor piety in administrators, a sort of nonsense taught at Rome; but from the presence, and operation, and influence of the Holy Spirit. By these holy institutions, after believing and receiving the blessings of salvation, he seals, increases, strengthens, and confirms unto the end, the faith, and love, and hope, and assurance of believers, in the possession and enjoyment of salvation. Salvation and the blessings are sealed in Scriptures, dictated and written by his inspiration. The promises spoken by the promiser in his holiness, sworn in his zeal, and ratified in the blood of the New Testament, are sure mercies. No additional assu-

* Rom. iv. 16.

† Rom. xi. 6.

rance is given to these, and none is necessary. But assurance of interest and possession may be clearer and darker, weaker and stronger; and for increasing and confirming this, baptism and the Lord's supper are instituted and sealing means. Behold the means of salvation! Every thing necessary is provided, and nothing superfluous is found. In these, as in the riches of his grace, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath abounded toward us, in all wisdom and prudence: *And to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen* *.

Fourthly, *The medium of our salvation.* This is expressed strongly in the text, *Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved.* The following considerations of the extent and vigour of the expression are obvious and interesting. Salvation is meritoriously through, — efficaciously thro', — honourably through, — certainly through, — exclusively through, — and finally through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation is *meritoriously* through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. His obedience and blood have the whole merit of the acquisition, and an exclusive claim to all the praise. The merit of salvation is a jewel in his crown, which he will never suffer to be torn out and transferred. Attempts to set it in virtuous conduct, or works of righteousness which we have done, are treason against the majesty of his grace, and will be repented and punished accordingly. *Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man who is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law. Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace* †. It was not circumcision, the obligation of which was dissolved, and the observation

* Jude, 25.

† Gal. v. 2. 3. 4.

going out of use, which kindled and blew into a flame the zeal of the apostle; but the merit presumed to be in the observation of that institution, with respect to justification and acceptance with God. Neither should the vehement opposition among believers of the gospel to justification by deeds of the law, be imputed to antipathy at social virtue, nor enmity against good works; but to the consideration and merit imagined to be in these performances, for procuring life and blessedness.

Salvation is *efficaciously* through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In obtaining it, his grace wrought; in applying it, his grace is exerted; and in possessing and enjoying it, his grace will reign for ever and ever. The whole efficiency in salvation is gracious. Justification and adoption are blessings of grace; redemption, vocation, and sanctification, are operations of grace. From grace, means of salvation receive efficacy; and by it the exertions and labours of men, of like passions with other men, have been effectual to the salvation of multitudes. *By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*.*

Salvation is *honourably* through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The law which requires obedience, promises life, and denounces death, is not voided through grace, but fulfilled, established, magnified, made honourable. The grace of God which bringeth salvation, is not a system rising out of the disgrace and ruin of the law. Our Lord Jesus Christ made himself subject to the law, and continued in his subjection, until he had wrought out and finished a righteousness, which hath fulfilled the precept and satisfied the penalty. Through this glorious righteousness, grace be-

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

comes a reigning power in salvation; and to the glory of the lawgiver, and the honour of his law, blesses with eternal life all who being dead to the law by the body of Christ, are married to him who is raised from the dead.

Salvation is *certainly* through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no ground to hesitate and doubt. The law and the prophets, the gospel and the apostles, are witnesses upon whose testimony all nations may build full assurance of faith; since they spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. In the assembly at Jerusalem, Peter said, *We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved*; and in his epistle to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus and some other countries, wrote, *That this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand*. Paul in his epistle to Timothy expresses himself with equal certainty: *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*. Our Lord himself speaks decisively and without ambiguity on the same subject: *God sent his Son into the world, that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. The Son of man is come to save that which was lost. I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me*.

Salvation is *exclusively* through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Exclusively not of the grace of the Father and the Holy Spirit; grace in the blessed persons of the glorious Godhead, though distinguished, is undivided, and never separated in operation: but *exclusively* of the deeds and works of men. In salvation grace is a reigning power, and will not admit an associate, nor suffer a competitor to come near the throne. *Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration,*

regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; whom he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.* There is no salvation in any other, and all salvation is in him. Art thou pleased, hearer, with the exclusion of works, and the reign of grace in salvation? Scripture, and not we, excludes the former, and fixes the latter in the throne.—Salvation is finally through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The great end or final cause, is the praise of the glory of his grace, and to him all the honour is ascribed. What is doing among the shining millions on high, and on what theme are the harps employed? Listen, O my soul, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Amen. Blessing, and glory, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen†.*

Salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, with these excellencies and blessings, encourages some to thankfulness for it, and invites others to receive and possess it freely and wholly. Heirs of salvation, who are delivered from wrath, and possessed of eternal life, ye are encouraged and exhorted to thankfulness. In the unknown ages of eternity you were chosen to salvation, and appointed to obtain it by our Lord Jesus Christ. In the fulness of time, salvation was accomplished for you by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. In effectual calling, you were delivered from the power of darkness, married unto Christ, pardoned, reconciled, accepted, and sanc-

* Tit. iii. 5. 6. 7.

† Rev. i. 5. v. 12. vii. 12.

tified. *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul* *. Say on, David: *He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God* †. Raise thy voice, O man! saved by the Lord. Bring hither to me the timbrel, the harp, and the psaltery. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction: who crowneth thee with loving kindness, and tender mercies. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things: so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles* ‡. In the exercise of this, fervent and holy believer, behold an example of gratitude, for the blessings in the great, everlasting, complete, and free salvation, which is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Keep your eye upon it constantly, and endeavour to copy it exactly into your own exercise. In thanksgiving, something more expressive is required than noise, even though it be a joyful noise with psalms, unto the rock of our salvation. New obedience or manners becoming the gospel of Christ, is the essence and spirit of praise, and is required with pointed solemnity. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God* ||? Art thou redeemed from the curse, saved from sin, delivered from the power of darkness, translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and made an heir according to the hope of eternal life? *serve, O serve the Redeemer without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of thy life* **. As thou hast received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk thou in

* Psal. lxi. 16. † Psal. xl. 2. 3. ‡ Psal. ciii. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

§ Mic. vi. 8.

** Luke, i. 74. 75.

him : rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as thou hast been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving *. Teach and admonish one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him †.

Salvation, and the blessings and excellencies, which encourage and constrain some to thankfulness, invite others to receive and enjoy. Salvation, the great, everlasting, complete, and free salvation, which is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, is set before the world as a blessing to be bestowed, and a gift to be received. Where is the person who doth not need it, unto whom it is not suitable, for whom it is not sufficient, and who is not warranted and commanded to receive it? This salvation, which thou art this day commanded to receive and enjoy, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us? It is very nigh unto thee. The word of faith, which is written in the Scripture and preached in the gospel, places it within sight of the eye, and within reach of the hand of every man; nor is it presumption in any to behold, and believe, and receive, and enjoy, before they have gone through a course of preparation. What must I do to be saved? Men, unto whom God committed the ministry of reconciliation, did not prescribe to that perishing creature forms of purifying and qualifying himself for salvation. Without hesitation or delay, and in plain and unambiguous language, these men said to the

* Col. ii. 6. 7.

† Col. iii. 16, 17.

keeper of the prison, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house**. *Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation†*. *And how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation‡*? If we do not receive, we neglect; and if we neglect, we despise; and who can say whether the next word shall not be, *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish*§. He who despised the law of Moses, died without mercy; and of how much forer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who despises the gospel and the salvation of the Son of God?

* Acts, xvi. 30. 31.

† Heb. ii. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

§ Acts, xiii. 41.

SER-

S E R M O N IV.

ACTS, xv. 11.

But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.

A BRAHAM is the father of all them who believe. Though he was not the first man who believed, the term *believed* is first used in describing his exercise: *He believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness* *. After this no term is more frequently used among the holy writers. Moses, and David, and the Prophets; Apostles, and Evangelists, and teachers, introduce it upon all proper occasions; and, by suggestion of the Holy Ghost, delight in this happy expression of the operations of our minds, in taking possession of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believing, and working for salvation, are plans which Scripture distinguishes and sets in opposition. *To him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness* †. Every believer, according to his profession and principles, is a worker; but no believer is saved by working. *By grace are ye saved, through faith. — Not of works,*

* Gen. xv. 6.

† Rom. iv. 4. 5.

lest any man should boast *. Concerning salvation by grace, through faith, the apostles were of one mind. They truly believed, and without a dissenting voice boldly professed, in the general assembly of the church, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ they expected to be saved. *We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved.*

The belief and profession of this universally interesting truth, That salvation is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the *fourth* and the *last* branch of our general method, and is now to be considered and explained. Belief and profession are distinct exercises. The church, whose sentiments Peter expresses, believed, and professed that they believed: *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* †. We shall therefore explain these exercises distinctly, observing the order in which they are mentioned.

Concerning our believing that salvation is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the following particulars may be considered. First, Holy Scripture, in which salvation is revealed and brought near, records the fact. Cast your eye upon the record, and observe how the fact concerning salvation is stated. Peter, when he rose to make the declaration which is our text, no doubt had before him such passages as these: *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities* †. *In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory* ‡. *Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation* **. *I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation unto the end of the earth* ††. *In thy seed shall all the na-*

* Eph. ii. 8. 9.

Isa. xlv. 25.

† Rom. x. 11.

** Isa. xlv. 17.

‡ Isa. liii. 11.

†† Isa. xlix. 6.

tions of the earth be blessed*. The Lord hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness†. Upon these, and similar passages in the former part of the record, the apostle built this faith: *We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.* The latter part of the record states the interesting fact precisely in the same manner: *Whoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but hath everlasting life‡. He that believeth shall be saved||. This is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life**.* *We have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ††.* Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved‡‡. The fact is, therefore, incontestably clear; and, from the beginning unto the end of the record, is visible to every single and spiritual eye.

Secondly, The fact is not merely stated and ascertained by the record; but a testimony to it, worthy of credit and acceptance, is inserted. That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, is not simply pronounced a saying. This would be too feeble. Paul, whose words were suggested by the Spirit, calls it a *faithful* saying, and affirms it to be worthy of all acceptance|||. In this testimony, prophets and apostles, and all the holy men who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, are unanimous. From Moses, who begins with the promise of salvation, through the seed of the woman in paradise, unto John, who seals up revelation and vision in Patmos, there is not one instance of disagreement. *Now if we re-*

* Gen. xxii. 18.

† Isa. lxi. 10.

‡ John, iii. 16.

|| Mark, xvi. 16.

** John, vi. 40.

†† Gal. ii. 16.

‡‡ Acts, iv. 12.

||| 1 Tim. i. 15.

ceive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater *. Salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, is attested by witnesses of unblemished integrity. This is the witness of men. But in the witness of these men we behold and believe the witness of God; for the men spake and wrote as they were moved by the Spirit of God. The testimony given to this salvation by prophets and apostles, is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son; and observe how it is summed up by the last of these holy writers: *We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world* †. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God* ‡.

Thirdly, A conviction that the fact, which appears upon the face of the record, is *infallibly true*, according to the testimony. The apostles were convinced, that the prophets had in fact testified of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that being under inspiration, their testimony was *infallibly true*. The same apostle, who, in a speech to the assembly of Jerusalem, delivered our text, introduces this sentiment in an epistle, which he afterwards wrote to the dispersion. *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace which should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them*

* 1 John, v. 9. † 1 John, iv. 14. ‡ 1 John, v. 9.—13

did signify, when he testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them who have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? The apostles believed the prophets, and called men to believe them. We believe both apostles and prophets. The declaration of apostles being added to the testimony of prophets, the foundation of our faith of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is widened and confirmed. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit†.*

Fourthly, The Lord Jesus Christ is received, and upon him hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began, is built, as upon an everlasting foundation. His righteousness, by which the precept of the law of works is fulfilled and magnified, and the penalty satisfied and glorified, is brought near, imputed, apprehended, and received. Through faith in this glorious righteousness, witnessed by the law and the prophets, the guilty, the perishing, and the lost, are made the righteousness of God in him; receive remission of sins, acceptance with God, the name, and nature, and honour of sons, and enter into possession of eternal salvation. By the power of the Holy Ghost, working faith in the record of God, and uniting them to Christ, they are regene-

* 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12.

† Eph. ii. 19.—22.

rated and created in Christ Jesus unto good works. *Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures* *. Particular passages manifested to the understanding, and graven on the heart, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, create peace, and rest, and joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the atonement is received; while the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in his face, breaks forth from the whole record, which, from beginning to end, is believed to be most firm truth, and received as a testimony worthy of all acceptation. In the testimony and record of God, the Saviour, in his personal glory and official fulness, sufficiency, suitableness, and freeness, is revealed and given to the world; and under the commandment of the everlasting God, every creature is invited, warranted, and bound to behold and receive him, as the Lord our righteousness and strength; while in beholding and receiving, every believer appropriates all that is in Christ, feeds on all that is in God, drinks all the consolation and joy in the Holy Ghost, and enters into the possession of eternal life, and everlasting rest. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved* †.

Fifthly, A persuasion of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the truth of the record. The apostles were persuaded of salvation themselves, and by preaching persuaded men. *I believed, and therefore have I spoken*; says a prophet: *We also believe, and therefore speak*; says an apostle ‡. The same spirit of faith who

* James, i. 18. Confession, Art III. 1560.

† John, iii. 16. 17.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 13.

dwelt in prophets, and was received by the hearing of prophecy, dwelt in apostles, and was received by the hearing of the gospel. Upon the very face of our text it appears, that the apostles were persuaded of their own salvation. Peter saith, we believe that *we* shall be saved. Had he intended an affirmative only upon the salvation of others, he would have said, we believe that *ye* shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. But instead of *ye* shall be saved, he says *we* shall be saved. In this speech, *we* is preferred to *ye* with great reason and propriety. By nature, these holy men were children of disobedience and wrath, even as others. Their sin, and guilt, and impotence, they neither denied nor concealed. Far from attempting to deny or conceal, they were forward to expose and record their circumstances among saved sinners. *We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; whom he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life*.*

Sixthly, This persuasion of salvation, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the truth of the record, is wrought in our hearts by the Spirit of faith. Though perfectly rational, it is not a natural effort of the mind. Our inclinations run the contrary way; and supernatural operations are necessary to turn the current. We must therefore introduce into the work of faith, the power and operation of the Spirit by the word,

* Tit. iii. 3.—7.

and

dwelt

and maintain that the persuasion cometh of him who calleth us. Some years before the meeting of the assembly in which the words of our text were delivered, when Peter had made this declaration of his faith, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God*; it was said, *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven* *. And Paul in one of his epistles says, the power to themward who believe, is an exceeding great power, according to that which God exerted in raising Christ from the dead †. The same apostle prays for another church, *That God would count them worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power* ‡. In creating this persuasion, the operation of the Holy Spirit is exerted by the word. The testimony of prophets, and the declaration of apostles, concerning salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, are placed in pertinent passages of Scripture; before the understanding, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and the sinful, and guilty, and perishing creature, convinced of their truth, is persuaded and enabled to receive and rest in them, as faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptance. This faith, which doth not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, is not of the same stature and firmness in all who believe. Peter stood firm and rose high, when he said, *We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they*. But sealing and confirming operations of the same Spirit of faith, which, by the word, established and advanced apostles, are sufficient, by the same word, to establish and advance believers unto full assurance of salvation. *In whom ye also trusted after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that*

* Matth. xvi. 16. 17. † Eph. i. 19. 20. ‡ 2 Thess. i. 11.

Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory *. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ †. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh: That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ‡.

The profession of this universally interesting truth, That salvation is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, is now to be explained. The apostles professed boldly and openly in the face of the world, that they believed to be saved through his grace; and their profession may be considered as an opposition to unbelief, and a standard lifted up against error.

First, Profession is an opposition to unbelief. Though men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, the apostles were not without remains of sin and unbelief. Unbelief is an enemy to every believer, whether he be weak or strong. Neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor any other apostle, were above the reach of this enemy. How did these strong believers resist the disaffected party in their own hearts? They opposed and resisted it, with bold and open professions of their interest in Christ, and of their persuasion of salvation through his grace and name. By these professions the insolence of unbelief was dashed, and reasonings against the faith and hope of the gospel were exposed, silen-

* Eph. i. 13. 14. † 1 Cor. i. 6. 7. 8. ‡ Col. ii. 1. 2. 3.

ced, and swept away. The same enemy which assailed and disturbed the exercise of apostles, as believers, dwells and works in our hearts. Lament, but be not surprised at its operations. Malignity is its nature. While poison is poison, unbelief will be malignity and enmity against grace, and salvation unto the praise of the glory of grace. Resist it in the spirit and armour of apostles and prophets. Boldly profess, and constantly hold fast the profession of your faith. Be not ashamed to maintain it in holy conversations before men, nor dismayed at perverse reasonings against it in your own minds, supported with temptations to cast away confidence toward God: *Seeing we have a great high-priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession* *. In ordinances of worship and duties of obedience, *Let us draw near unto God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; — and Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised* †. Uprightness and constancy in the profession of our holy faith, are duties and honours in the Christian life, and raise our spirits to sustain the grand attack at the end of it without fainting. Behold this exemplified and recommended in the dying testimonies of two apostolic men. *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing* ‡. *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance:*

* Heb. iv. 14. † Heb. x. 22, 23. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Secondly, Profession is a standard lifted up against error. When opposition to the faith raises its voice, contending for the faith begins, and must continue till opposition be silenced, convinced, and subdued. The apostles had very soon occasion for the whole armour of God; and, after bringing multitudes to the knowledge, and love, and belief of the truth, were obliged, with every spiritual weapon, to protect and defend them against the opposition of error. A question concerning the necessity of circumcision, and the consideration of works of the law in salvation, made great noise in Antioch, and at last came before the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. The party against the truth of the gospel in this question, was of the sect of the Pharisees, and was not soon silenced. There was much disputing before the assembly agreed in an edifying decision. But the strongest believers, left to themselves, are weak, and easily moved by temptation and fear. Peter, who took a decided and laudable part in the determination of that day, is afterwards blamed by Paul, and withstood to the face, for dissembling his sentiments, and not walking uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, and the decree of the assembly†. In imitation of that mild and upright body in the church, let us

* 2 Pet. i. 12.—17.

† Gal. ii. 11.

stand fast in one spirit, and with one mind strive together for the faith of the gospel. If error found a noisy party in churches, which were planted, inclosed, and watered by apostles, in the last days, which are perilous times, we should not be surprised to hear the noise of adversaries from the same quarter. Works of righteousness which we do, or are presumed capable to do, are introduced into salvation by some as the complete, and by others as the partial cause. *The former* build eternal life upon human obedience. Virtuous conduct, confined by these blunderers unto a part of the moral law, is supposed sufficient to intitle sinners to the possession of a heaven. Unto the love, grace, obedience, sufferings, and death of our Redeemer, nothing is assigned but the example or pattern of virtuous conduct; while all who believe not in their system, are ungenerously held to be disaffected to virtuous conduct. But a plain reader of his Bible must soon be convinced, that this flattering system frustrates the grace of God, and makes Christ of none effect to the world. There he will read, *O that every reader would understand and believe, If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain* *; and *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us* †. *The latter*, joining to the righteousness of Christ works of our own, advance these works unto auxiliary and partial causes of salvation. As the work of every man will be tried, this must be fatal to the works, though the worker should escape. *For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every*

* Gal. ii. 21.

† Tit. iii. 5.

man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire *. Virtuous conduct, or sincere obedience, is not an operating cause, but an essential part of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not saved of works, nor for works, nor by works; but chosen unto salvation through them, redeemed unto them, ordained to walk in them, and to perform them thoroughly furnished. For this faith which Prophets and Apostles received from the Spirit, and delivered to the saints, let us contend earnestly; and in nothing terrified by adversaries, instruct in meekness those who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.

Unto what we have spoken, we shall add at present only some exhortation. First, Be firmly persuaded of this truth, that salvation is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. To Prophets it was an object of inquiry: To Apostles it was a theme of discourse. In this both were rooted and grounded; and to the last continued steadfast and immoveable believers, dying with high praises of it in their mouths, and sealing it with their blood. Nor can it be abandoned, without deserting Prophets and Apostles, and the Son of God himself. *I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me* †. Wherefore be ye also steadfast in this truth, and hold it fast in all extremities.

Secondly, Be diligent to attain the persuasion of your own salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostles were persuaded, not only that sinners are saved through his grace, but

* 1. Cor. iii. 11.—15.

† John, xiv. 6.

that, through it, they themselves, as sinners, would be saved. Stronger persuasion of salvation appears in none than in the Apostle Paul. How did he possess himself of this jewel? Was the book of life laid open to him, or, with the grace of apostleship, was a special revelation received? No. By believing the record which God gave of his Son, by fulfilling the ministry which he received by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and by the anointing and sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise, this man rose unto full assurance of understanding, faith, and hope. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief**. In this we behold believing of the record. *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God†*. Here we behold diligence in the ministry. *Now he who stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God: Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts‡*. Here is the anointing and sealing of the Spirit. Ye see the means and advantages which were furnished unto Paul. Observe next how ye are furnished. That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, is still the record of God; and believing it, which is the duty and interest of every sinner, is not a transient operation of the soul, but a continued exercise, extending itself the whole length of our spiritual life, and increasing its own evidence as it goes along: *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself*||; and the more firmly he believes, the witness will be clearer and stronger. Again, Paul and you are members of the same body. All the

* 1 Tim. i. 15.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

† Acts, xx. 24.

|| John, v. 10.

difference is in station and service. In his high station he was not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations. *Thou hast fully known*, says he to a young minister, *my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience**. Behold the virtuous conduct or the sincere obedience of this man, whose great object was to be found in Christ; not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith †: And behold his unwearied diligence to make his calling and election sure: *And we desire, that every one of you, in the lower stations of the body, do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises ‡*. Climb the mountain of holiness, ye who walk in darkness and have no light. The nearer ye ascend the top, election will be more visible; and the more clearly ye will see, that from the beginning you were chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. The hand of the clock points to the hour of the day, and the needle in the compass to the poles of heaven; and holiness in all manner of conversation, points truly and infallibly to our calling and election in Christ: *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love §*. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began ***. Finally, Whatever be the difference in measure, you are anointed and

* 2 Tim. iii. 10.

† Philip. iii. 9.

‡ Heb. vi. 11. 12.

§ Eph. i. 4.

** 2 Tim. i. 9.

sealed in Christ by the same Spirit of promise. Anointing and sealing were none of the exclusive privileges of apostles. These holy men rejoiced in such operations of the Spirit in their own hearts, as privileges of saints, and called saints to rejoice with them in the abundance of the consolation. *In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance**. Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, *Abba, Father*. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God†. Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you : and ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie : and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him‡. Behold how ye are furnished to attain persuasion of your salvation ; and we exhort you, *To give diligence to make your calling and election sure ; that ye may be able to say, We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.*

Thirdly, Be stedfast in the profession of your holy faith ; and without wavering hold fast unto the end this universally interesting truth, That salvation is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It hath adversaries who make great noise, and who are in great fear for virtue and obedience, where there is no fear. O that they would turn their eyes to the examples of virtue and obedience, which Prophets and Apostles set before the world ! But though misrepresented by some, and contradicted and blasphemed by others, be not afraid nor ashamed to profess it to be your faith. Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the law of the

* Eph. i. 13. 14. † Rom. viii. 15. 16. ‡ 1 John, ii. 20. 27.

Most Holy is established, the perfections of the Most High are glorified, and the salvation of men is fixed upon an honourable and sure foundation. By Prophets and Apostles, inspiration sets a seal to salvation through it, and reveals it to the world as the only medium of the salvation which fits our necessities. Be not offended when you hear self-sufficient men defaming it; nor dissemble and conceal your principles, because these are not approved among the wise and prudent. *If there come any man to you as a teacher, and bring not with him salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed, is a partaker of his evil daeds**, and an accessory to the ruinous consequences of his error. Look to the principles, as well as unto the manners of the young, the giddy, and the thoughtless. Sentiments dishonourable to grace, and salvation through it, are natural. With inclinations to these, your sons and daughters are born into the world. Do not suffer them to go naked and defenceless among the wolves; nor to come abroad into the world without warnings of the danger of erroneous teachers, by whom their natural sentiments of the way of entering into life, instead of being reprov'd and corrected, will be flattered and confirmed. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; and hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing, firm unto the end of your own conversation, that when Christ shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

* 2 John, 10. 21.

But

But all men have not the faith which believes in the Lord, and which justifies, purifies, and saves. Graces and gifts are separable blessings, and are not always in the possession of the same persons. With gifts, the faith of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ may be preached unto the world by men whose hearts are never purified in obeying the truth through the Spirit; and hearers, by the illumination of their minds, may understand and approve it, without believing, or without receiving the love of the truth that they may be saved. Unbelievers of every sentiment and persuasion, we exhort to use means of believing; and in the use of these, to wait upon the Lord for power of believing. *Use means of believing.* While it is called to-day, daily read the Scriptures. In these holy writings the way of salvation is made known and described. Consider what you read in them, of the sinful, and guilty, and miserable state of mankind; of the holiness, and righteousness, and mercy, and promises of God; of the love, and grace, and obedience, and death of Christ; of the power, and work, and consolation of the Holy Spirit; and of the calls, and invitations, and commands to receive the salvation, which is revealed and brought nigh to every sinner who has an eye to see, and an ear to hear. Give ear to men of understanding, who preach the faith, and shew unto you the way of salvation. By the foolishness of preaching, it hath pleased God to save them who believe; and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. In using means of believing, *wait upon the Lord for power of believing.* Unto them who ask him, our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit of truth, of power, of love, and of a sound mind, is given, and by the hearing of faith received, men believe; and

O what wonders are wrought in this day of power !
 The eyes of the blind are opened, and the ears of
 the deaf unstopped ; prisoners are loosed, and cap-
 tives redeemed ; the guilty are pardoned, and the
 filthy washed ; the naked are clothed, and the
 hungry filled ; enemies are reconciled, and aliens
 adopted ; the lame leap as the hart, and the tongues
 of the dumb sing.

SER.

S E R M O N V.

ACTS, xv. 11.

But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.

BY the disobedience of one, who represented all, mankind fell into the state of sin and misery. Deliverance out of this state, is the salvation which the Scripture reveals, and which the ministry of reconciliation preaches. Who, and what, and where, is the wonderful person who wrought our deliverance? If there be a natural propensity in individuals to dive into the pedigree of their families, and in nations to fix that of their princes, heroes, and legislators; sinners are more deeply interested to know, who the great person is, what the great person is, and where to find the great person, who came into the world, that through him the world might be saved.

In the first of the preceding Discourses, his official names, Lord, Jesus, Christ, are explained; in the second, his grace is displayed; in the third, salvation through his grace is described; and in the fourth, faith of salvation through his grace, and profession of it, are recommended. From these interesting considerations, the following inferences shall be laid before you. Mistakes among believers concerning the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation

salvation are hurtful; — Clear and correct apprehensions of it are useful; — Faith of salvation through it is attainable; — Boasting is excluded and silenced; — And among believers, glorying in the Lord is sober and reasonable exercise.

First, Mistakes among believers concerning the power and splendour of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation are hurtful. Every mistake is contrary to our interest, and hurts our faith and obedience, in proportion to the importance of the truth which is mistaken. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in our salvation, is of essential and universal importance from beginning to end; and mistakes concerning its operation and influence, undermine the health and vigour of the spiritual life, discourage believers from laying hold on the strong consolations which nourish and support it, and disable them for those bold exertions in faith and obedience which appear in the lives of holy men. A self-sufficient and legal turn of mind clogs the operations of the soul, and prevents its reaching those heights of joy and peace in believing, unto which the Holy Spirit, by evangelical principles, raises the more perfect and the more enlightened believer. Persons who are in darkness and mistakes concerning the exclusive and triumphant operation of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation, and who never understand how self is excluded, though they love and serve Christ, and read and hear of his being the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, do not understand how he is so to them. They do not see clearly the glory of this consideration of him; nor are they able to draw out the proper consequences, with respect to dependence upon his righteousness, for deliverance from wrath, and acceptance with God. Their hope of salvation is a bruised reed and a smoking flax; and by occurren-

ces in the course of Providence, their experience in the power of religion is every day unbottomed, and turned upside down. Unacquainted with the operation of faith toward the Lord our righteousness and strength, and performing the duties of holiness in something of their own, they frequently stand still in sanctification, slide sometimes back, and move forward always slowly and heavily. Without assurance of their redemption from the curse, and deliverance from the law, fear of death keeps them in bondage, and raises alarms every hour of the day, which loosen the joints of their loins, and smite their knees one against another. Your exercise, believers, compared with the righteousness of faith, and law of Christ, will discover to you a great deal more hurtfulness and iniquity in mistakes, concerning the power, and sufficiency, and splendour, of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation; and when these are discovered, no means proper for correcting and removing them should be neglected. Read, consider, and commit to memory those precious passages of Scripture, in which the Spirit testifies of Christ, of the completeness of his righteousness, of the reign of grace through him, of our deliverance by him from the law, of our being made the righteousness of God in him, and of an entire dependence upon him as the glory of our strength, in serving him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life, and in working out our salvation with fear and trembling. In humility, meditation, prayer, and conference, endeavour to understand more clearly and extensively the mind of the Spirit, in his testimony to Christ; and by new discoveries of it, correct old mistakes, and renounce former errors. And may *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understand-*
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ing being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead*.

Secondly, Among believers, clear and correct apprehensions of the power and splendour of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation, are *useful and serviceable*. Delivered from the law, which held them under the curse; set free from the guilt and dominion of sin, which reigned in them; and, by evangelical principles received in demonstration of the Spirit, relieved from perplexities concerning union to Christ, and acceptance with God; they joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they have now received the atonement, mount the high places of holiness and heavenly mindedness, where prophets, apostles, and martyrs walked and sang; sustain billows of adversity and buffetings of temptation with the firmness of rocks, conquer every enemy, and, without fainting, encounter all that is terrible in dying. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is*

* Eph. i. 17. 18. 19. 20.

in Christ Jesus our Lord *. Two hundred and fifty years ago, a young man †, a native of Scotland, a relation to the then reigning family, and burnt at the age of twenty-three, expresses himself concerning gratuitous salvation, with clearness and precision, truly apostolical: “No man is justified
 “ by the deeds of the law, but by the faith of
 “ Christ.—He was punished for thee, and there-
 “ fore thou shalt not be punished. I do not say,
 “ that we ought to do no good deeds; but I say,
 “ we should do no good works, to the intent to
 “ obtain the remission of sins, and the inheritance
 “ of heaven: For God saith, Thy sins are for-
 “ given thee for my Son’s sake; and thou shalt
 “ have the inheritance of heaven for my Son’s
 “ sake.—I condemn not good deeds, but I con-
 “ demn trust in any works; for all the works
 “ wherein a man putteth any confidence, are
 “ by his confidence poisoned, and become evil.
 “ Wherefore thou *must* do good works; and be-
 “ ware of doing them with the view to *deserve*
 “ any good for them.” The righteousness which
 is of faith, displays in salvation the operations and
 splendour of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ;
 and is not merely the *truth* which is believed, but
 the *medium* through which the unction is received;
Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by
the hearing of faith ‡, is the apostle’s manner of in-
 sinuating to these bewitched believers, that the faith
 of Christ, in opposition to the works of the law, is
 the channel through which sanctifying, sealing,
 and confirming influence flows into the church,
 and the mean by which all gracious operations are
 performed among the members. Look into holy
 Scripture, where the obedience of prophets, a-
 postles, and believers, is delineated; look into
 bloody annals of the church, where the patience

* Rom. viii. 33.—39.

† Patrick Hamilton.

‡ Gal. iii. 2.

of martyrs is attested. In peace and joy in believing, these holy men mounted high; and like eagles in the air, and with eyes fixed on the Sun of righteousness, soared beyond the sight of common spectators. In the race of obedience, they ran not as uncertainly; and laying aside every weight, and forgetting things behind, reached forth unto things before, and with amazing swiftness pressed toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In the warfare of patience, they fought not as men that beat the air; and by the meekness and patience of Christ conquered and triumphed. Unto what principle shall we ascribe the height to which they soared in believing, the swiftness with which they ran the way of God's commandments, and the success and glory with which they conquered and triumphed in suffering and patience? By themselves, these are ascribed unto the anointing and sealing of the Holy Spirit, whom they received by the hearing of faith. Great, therefore, is the importance of the righteousness which is of faith, both as the *truth* to be believed, and the *medium* through which the unction is received.

Thirdly, Faith of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is attainable among believers. By this faith two truths are believed, that the salvation of *others* is through his grace, and that *our own* salvation is through his grace. The apostles believed and professed both; and to believe and profess both, believers have in the word of faith the same ground, the same help, and the same Spirit. The faith of the *first* is not saving. Men may be persuaded, that sinners who believe in Christ shall be saved through his grace, and yet perish themselves in unbelief and sin. The faith of the *second*, being a work of the Holy Spirit by the word in believers, is certainly saving. None ex-

cept believers on the Son of God have the witness in themselves. By adding to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity; those who have the witness in themselves, are distinguished from those, who, turning grace into lasciviousness, and sporting themselves with their own deceivings, receive in themselves that recompence of their error which is meet, and utterly perish in their own corruption. Every believer hath not the full assurance of this faith; and one who hath it to-day, may want it to-morrow. But full assurance of it hath been attained, is attainable, and ought to be diligently sought. Its consolations and riches are better than the pleasures of sin and the treasures of Egypt. Under the persuasion of our own salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, every heavy thing is light, and every duty pleasant: Bitters in the cup of adversity become sweet, and blessings in the cup of salvation are refined into spiced wines: Clay-cold graves, full of worms and clods of dust, are peaceable habitations, sure dwellings, and quiet resting-places: The dead sea between us and the glory of the kingdom, deprived of the power of destruction, is smooth and navigable; and like a stately vessel coming into port before a fair wind, and with every sail bent, the soul shall enter the desired haven. *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ*.*

Fourthly, By salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ boasting is silenced and exclu-

* 2 Pet. i. 10. 11.

ded. The righteous would have something to say. They do their best, and their righteousness has all the perfection competent to the righteousness of men in their circumstances. *To him that worketh, the reward is reckoned of debt* *. Claims of reward due to workers of righteousness, for works of righteousness which they have wrought, are founded upon covenant, and supported by law. If Adam had wrought righteousness unto the end, his reward, by the promise and covenant of the Sovereign, would have been of debt; and law, instead of stopping his mouth, must have allowed and supported his claim. But where can the righteous be found, and what have the guilty to say? If these shall raise their voice, and after law hath stopped every mouth, attempt to speak for themselves, neither reason nor patience have ears to hear. Talk no more so exceeding proudly, O fallen man; let not arrogancy come out of thy mouth, for *the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed* †. Excluding and silencing this unreasonable and vain-glorious talking, was a secret in the contemplation of the wisdom of God, when sinners to be saved were chosen; and is brought to light, and made manifest, when those who were chosen are called to receive salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto*

* Rom. iv. 4.

† 1 Sam. ii. 3.

us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith†. Since the law of faith hath excluded this vain, and noisy, and empty thing, it should never be introduced among believers who are under this law. Paul boasted, *As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia*; but, adds he, *that which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly in this confidence of boasting*‡. Boasting before men, in his circumstances, and in his measure, was admissible. Boasting before the Lord was contrary to his principles, and the object of his detestation. The man who would not admit, that our father Abraham could boast before God, cannot be supposed to allow himself to boast before God. To silence it, both prophets and apostles raise their voices: *Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches*||. *Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it***.

To that love wherewith Christ loved thee, there is in thee no motive. Of that immense price paid for thy redemption, no part is advanced by thee. In that righteousness which is upon thee, none of thy works are found. These treasures which thou possessest, are not riches which thou hast acquired: The good works which thou doest, are not performed in thine own strength. The blessings with which thou art distinguished, are not bought with thy money. For the inheritance laid up and re-

* 1 Cor. i. 26.—31.

† Rom. iii. 27.

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 10. 17.

|| Jer. ix. 23.

** 1 Cor. iv. 7.

served in heaven, thou hast given nothing. Since therefore thou art nothing, and doest nothing in salvation, after the law of faith hath stopped thy mouth, wilt thou glory as if thou wert something, and could do something? In justification, thou receivedst the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification, thou workest by the Spirit of Christ; under infirmities, thou art supported by the power of Christ; and the best thing thou canst say, is, The Lord Jesus Christ, in whom I have righteousness and strength, is all and in all.

Fifthly, Among believers glorying in the Lord is sober and reasonable exercise. This boasting the law of faith commands; and in it believers, under both dispensations and in all extremities, rejoiced. *My soul shall make her boast in the Lord**. In God we boast all the day long†. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory‡. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ§. To him spirits of just men before the throne lift up their voices, singing as they shine, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood***. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen††. Principalities and powers, in heavenly places, unite with these, and pitching their voices on the highest key, say, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing‡‡*. Hath boasting and glorying in the Lord been the exercise of prophets, apostles, and righteous men on earth? Is it the honour of spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, and the delight of angels who stand be-

* Psal. xxxiv. 2.

† Psal. xlv. 8.

‡ Isa. xlv. 25.

§ Gal. vi. 14.

** Rev. v. 9.

†† Rev. i. 5. 6.

‡‡ Rev. v. 12.

fore the throne, and shall we sit silent? God forbid. Unto the Lord our righteousness, and strength, and salvation, we will make a joyful noise, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Scripture commands it, reason commends it, and holy men of every denomination, and under all dispensations, set the example. Is gratitude a constellation among the virtues; and is not the conversation of a sinner saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, a firmament in which it should shine as the sun? Gratitude to a Saviour—the Saviour who undertook all, performed all, endured all, finished all, triumphed in all, and is accepted and glorified in all; collecting heat and vigour from the Sun of righteousness, and the Spirit of holiness, shoots rays of light and joy through the system of virtue and obedience, and shines more and more unto the perfect day; when ascending a higher meridian, its beams will be as the brightness of the firmament, and the beams of a sun for ever and ever. Hath the Lord Jesus finished all, and triumphed in all? who is the man, and where is the sinner, that dares presume in his heart to divide with him the glory of salvation? None of it is due to us. All is due to him. We will therefore adopt the sentiment of Israel, the people saved by the Lord, and with one mind, and one soul, say, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake* *. Though disused and exploded by men of fame in wisdom and knowledge, the sentiment is soberly serious, and perfectly rational. Let reason be heard in its own province, and it will not hesitate to say, Glory is due unto him who wrought salvation; and from us, for whom he wrought it, the glory of gratitude is a reasonable acknowledgement. If men of reason and learning

* Psal. cxv. 1.

will still exclaim.—Warm admirers of grace and redemption, and cold friends to virtue and obedience, there is an answer: We are not mad, most learned brethren, but speak forth words of truth and soberness; for we cannot but speak things which we have read and heard. Read the Scriptures, in which ye think ye have eternal life, for these are they which testify, that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Unto these inferences, two exhortations shall be added. By evil doing, beware of defaming salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and endeavour to commend it by well doing.

Beware of defaming salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ by doing evil. Redemption from all iniquity, is an essential glory in this salvation; and where men who profess to receive and admire it, continue in sin, and walk after the flesh, its beauty is defaced in the eyes of the world, and its glory covered with vomit and filthiness. Much of the odium evangelical principles are lying under in the present day, and many of the suspicions entertained of their immoral tendency, are occasioned by the irregular conduct, and ungracious tempers which appear among the few by whom these holy principles are received and acknowledged. The unrenewed heart sets against them the whole force of its enmity, and by wicked and ungodly men, who receive not the love of the truth, they always will be, as they always have been, contradicted and blasphemed; but the dishonourable sentiments and unjust suspicions of real enemies are confirmed and rivetted by the hollowness and falsehood of deceitful friends. What, my brethren and my charge, do ye not know, that these are sanctifying principles—the only channel through which the Spirit of holiness is conveyed and

and received, and the only mean by which the church is built up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation? After having been taught this knowledge, should you go in among evil-doers, and by stretching forth your hands unto iniquity, keep fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness, you will do wickedly against conviction of the truth, and tempt the world, who are influenced more by deeds than by words and professions, to conclude, that to continue in sin that grace may abound, is, after all, the true inference. If the man who spits in your face, and casts iniquity upon your reputation, is punishable at law for insult and defamation; of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy, who cast iniquity upon the grace of God, and by shameful spuing upon the glory of salvation, cause the truth, which is after godliness, to be contradicted, blasphemed, and abhorred? For the truth's sake, which is after godliness, and which ye know, depart from evil doers, cease to do evil, abhor that which is evil, abstain from all appearance of evil. Subdue the pride of the heart, and purge out of it the old leaven of malice and wickedness. Let nothing which is profane appear in life and manners. In the land of uprightness deal not unjustly. Behold the majesty of the Lord, and abandon these cunning and fraudulent practices which are common in the world. Give no man occasion to call you thieves, or liars, or knaves, drunkards, or swearers, or perjured persons. Fornication and all uncleanness, let not these be named among you, as becometh saints: *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God*.*

By doing well, endeavour to commend salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. By

* Eph. v. 5.

well-doing you will persuade men. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven* *. By well-doing you will silence enemies. *For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men* †. By well-doing you will glorify God. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit* ‡. By well-doing you will justify yourselves to men, and perfect your faith in their sight. *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect* ||? By well-doing you will adorn the doctrine which is according to godliness. *Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again, not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things* **. By well-doing you will obtain good report of the truth which is after godliness. *Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself* ††. By well-doing you will convince your own hearts of the soundness of your experience in religion. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him* ‡‡. And to mention no more of the advantages, by well-doing you will be useful to the world. *These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men* |||.

After a testimony in favour of well-doing, so various, so circumstantial, and so express, you will

* Matth. v. 16.

|| James, ii. 21. 22.

‡ 1 John, ii. 3.; iii. 19.

† 1 Pet. ii. 15.

** Tit. ii. 9. 10.

|| Tit. iii. 8.

‡ John, xv. 8.

†† 3 John, 12.

expect to hear good stewards of the manifold grace of God raise their voices high, and speak for well-doing among believers with a firm and determined tone. By well-doing commend and glorify the grace of the Lord Jesus, through which ye believe that ye will be saved. Grace is not an enemy to the doing of good works, but unto trust in the doing of these for acceptance and reward. *Renounce the trust*, O people, saved by the Lord, and *maintain the practice*. Could ye consecrate mountains into altars, and burn upon these cattle of a thousand hills; could ye turn the ocean into oil, and pour out ten thousand rivers for drink-offerings; could ye part with a first-born for your transgression, and give all the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul; this is the service which the Lord hath commanded, this is the obedience by which he is glorified, and this is the sacrifice which, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all, he will accept. Do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God; and if ye do not this, ye deny the faith, and blaspheme the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are worse than infidels. I speak not these things to shame you; but as my beloved sons I warn you: *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* *.

Turn closets into bethels, and houses into churches, and in these, and every where, give unto the Lord the glory which is due unto his name.

* Tit. ii. 11.—14.

Enter the courts of his sanctuary with the voice of joy and praise; and, according to the ordinances and forms which he hath prescribed, worship the Lord in the beauties of holiness. Fear his great and holy name, run into it in an evil day, hope in the word which makes it known, and, with reverence adore all the glory of it in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. Call the day of the Lord a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable, and by honouring him upon it in the duties and ordinances of his worship, delight yourselves in him, remembering that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to the gospel. Love the Lord your God and Redeemer, with all your heart, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and with all your soul, and love your neighbours as yourselves.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it. Wives, subject yourselves to your husbands in every thing, as the church is subject unto Christ. Parents, train up your children in the knowledge and fear of the Lord; and, children, obey your parents in the Lord, that it may be well with you, and ye may live long upon the earth. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Servants, obey in all things your masters, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ. Honour the king, and pay tribute and custom unto whom these are due. Submit to governors and obey magistrates. Be mild and gentle toward all men. Be sober, temperate, and chaste, and possess your bodies in sanctification and honour. Fulfil your engagements, perform your promises, pay your debts, keep your word in all your dealings, be honest and just. Speak truth every one to his neighbour, and love

no false oath. Be peaceable, pitiful, and courteous, content with your own condition, and charitably and well-disposed toward your neighbours. This is a short delineation of virtuous conduct; and faith of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, furnishes life, strength, motives, and acceptance, to follow it in our practice. The man who is holy, and humble, and heavenly in his conversation, who makes the law of Christ his rule, and the glory of God his end, and who, from principle, dares not allow himself to do or to speak an ill thing, is a silent and practical preacher of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, commends it better and more seriously, and is more likely to be useful, both to friends and enemies, with his life, than licensed teachers, whose lives are bad, will be even with sound doctrine.

We shall conclude with an observation which affects our eternal interest, and ought to be considered with great seriousness. Neglect of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ must be fatal. Were there two ways of being saved, sinners would have a choice, and every one might fall into that which he liked best. One, who had a predilection for works, might go along with the law, and by keeping the commandments as well as he was able, justify himself, and inherit eternal life. Another, who preferred grace, might renounce trust in works of righteousness, and believe in Jesus Christ, that he might be justified by the faith of Christ, rather than by the works of the law. Advantages or disadvantages with regard to ease, and privileges, and comforts, would be of small consideration, since both ways would lead to heaven, and one sinner would be as safe in the way of works, as another could be in that of grace. But what saith the Scripture? *By grace are ye saved,*
through

through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved†. There was a commandment ordained to life, and a way opened to heaven by obedience. But after Adam by his disobedience made himself and us sinners, and the world became guilty before God, the curse shut up that way, and held mankind under sin and death. Nor did our Saviour open it again, when he said to a presumptuous and self-sufficient sinner, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. That deluded and miserable man, though righteous in his own eyes, Jesus knew to be guilty before God; and that a declaration concerning entering into life by keeping the commandments, which was the way of his own heart, was the proper mean to discover his hypocrisy, to stop his mouth, and to convince him of his guilt, and ignorance, and insufficiency.*

Scripture having concluded all under sin, stopped every mouth, found the whole world guilty before God, and shut up the way of life by keeping the commandments, salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ must be the only expedient, and the neglect of it must of consequence be fatal: *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation‡? Attend to this remonstrance, O hearers! Consider it with great seriousness. Of all considerations, death and life, destruction and salvation, are the most serious and interesting. The punishment to which sinners are liable, is not a little temporary inconveniency. Eternal death and everlasting destruction, are terms in which it is denounced. The salvation which is set before them, is not some*

* Eph. ii. 8. 9.

† Acts, iv. 12.

‡ Heb. ii. 3.

small and transient advantage. Glory, honour, and immortality, are terms by which it is revealed and promised. Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, whosoever believeth shall escape destruction and obtain salvation. *We believe, faith Peter in the text, that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.*

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S E R M O N VI.

TITUS, ii. 11.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.

SER-

WHEN the God of glory appeared unto Abraham, he left Mesopotamia, came to Charran, and from thence removed himself into Canaan. When the angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, Moses turned aside and drew near to see that great sight. When the star of the incarnation appeared in the east, the wise men rose from speculation, and travelled to Jerusalem, in order to find and to worship the Saviour of the world. When cloven tongues appeared and sat upon the apostles, they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and in many languages spake the wonderful works of God. When the Lord Jesus appeared unto Saul in the way, he fell to the earth, and in consternation and terror cried, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* When the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, appeared unto all men, some beheld, and believed, and obtained salvation, and some looked away, and turned aside, and attempted to save themselves by works of the law.

In preceding Discourses there is an endeavour to commend unto the world salvation through the
grace.

grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation, we have observed, is brought within hearing of every ear as a report to be believed, within sight of every eye as an object to be beheld, and within reach of every hand as a blessing to be received. In the text, at the head of this Discourse, the appointed mean of bringing salvation near presents itself to consideration, and introduces one of the strongest motives to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things: *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.*

In explaining these words, we shall ascertain and illustrate the meaning of this sacred expression, *the grace of God*; — then shew how the grace of God bringeth salvation; — and finally declare the sense in which it hath appeared to all men.

It is proposed to ascertain and illustrate the meaning of this sacred expression in the front of our text, *the grace of God*. As a mode of expression, *grace of God* has been suspected to be inelegant and vulgar. Speakers and writers, whose claims to correctness and elegance in other respects are indisputable, either exclude it altogether, or admit and use it with such coldness and reserve, and with such negligence and inattention to its meaning and use in Scripture, as to shew that they do not delight in it as an happy expression. But from the beginning it was not so. Without insisting on the revelation and teaching of the Spirit, Paul, whose merit as a scholar was of the first rank, whose knowledge of the language in which he wrote was extensive, and whose taste for correct and elegant composition equalled that of the finest geniuses in Greece or in Rome, uses this expression without reserve. He repeats it so frequently, and with so much holy warmth, as to convince plain and unbiassed readers,

that

that he understood it, and delighted in it as a proper and elegant expression of some spiritual ideas.

The meaning of this elegant and sacred expression, *the grace of God*, is to be ascertained by its context and connection in places where it stands. In the end of the verse above the text, a system is mentioned under this designation, *The doctrine of God our Saviour*. Whatever be meant by the doctrine of God our Saviour, must be signified by *the grace of God*. In this connection, these expressions are synonymous, and characters of the same holy system. Nor can it be admitted that a different idea is introduced, without supposing the Apostle to lose sight of his subject, to throw his reasoning out of form, and to perplex and bewilder the understanding of every reader. The text is not the only place in Scripture where the doctrine of God our Saviour, or the gospel of Christ, is designed by this expression, *the grace of God*. At Antioch Paul persuaded the religious profelytes to continue *in the grace of God**. To the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, he declared, that the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, was to testify the gospel of *the grace of God*†. The Corinthians he beseeched not to *receive the grace of God in vain*‡. To the Ephesians the same apostle says, *If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given to me*§. This designation of the gospel of Christ is used also by the Apostle Peter: *I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand***.

In another place of the same epistle, he exhorts to *minister one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*††. In these and several other texts, *the grace of God* signifies the doctrine of God our Saviour, or the gospel of Christ; and, after ascer-

* Acts, xiii. 43.

§ Eph. iii. 2.

† Acts, xx. 24.

** 1 Pet. v. 12.

‡ 2 Cor. vi. 7.

†† 1 Pet. iv. 10.

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taining in this manner the meaning of the expression, we will next illustrate its meaning and use in the following particulars.

First, Grace is the high ground where this holy doctrine appears to have its spring. Follow up to the source every blessing of the gospel of Christ, and you will come to the sovereign love and free favour of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Grace, free, sovereign, and rich grace, is the head and fountain of that deep and broad river, whose streams, in their several motions and windings, make wildernesses and deserts to rejoice and blossom as the rose. The blessings of the gospel are not only excellent in themselves, but derive additional excellence from their spring and source. Operations and motions among the glorious persons of the Godhead, in preparing the measures, and opening the channels and communications of these blessings, are motions and operations of grace, and issue in the praise of its glory. To shew in ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace, the God of all grace set up from everlasting the Lord Jesus Christ in his official glory; made the covenant with him; filled the promises in him with grace and truth; elected and gave to him the heirs of the grace of life; and sent him into the world to redeem them by his blood, to purify them by his Spirit, and to bring them to glory, honour, and immortality. Survey this glorious system of divine operations, which is called the doctrine of God our Saviour, or the gospel of Christ; consider the truths which it brings to light, the promises which it holds out to our faith, and the blessings which it offers to the guilty and the miserable, and you will be convinced, that from beginning to end, it is the effect of the manifold wisdom and the manifold grace of God.

Secondly, In this holy doctrine the glory of grace

is displayed and made illustrious. Grace was not unknown to Adam before sin entered into the world. Though he and his posterity had continued in obedience, they would have known that love and grace are essential glories of the living God, who is the creator and preserver of men, and that communications from him, even to holy creatures, are all gracious. But in the gospel of Christ grace rises to the highest majesty, appears a reigning perfection, and displays its riches with inconceivable pomp and magnificence. These riches, preferable to veins of gold and sapphire, and laid open by the doctrine of God our Saviour, exceed the knowledge of saints on earth, surpass the understanding of spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, and transcend the comprehension and praises of angels who minister before the throne. *Unsearchable riches, and exceeding riches, riches of his goodness, riches of his grace, riches of his glory*, are commendations and praises which Scripture bestows. Tongues of men nor of angels cannot raise them higher; and all that remains for the poor, and the wretched, and the miserable, is to receive the abundance of grace, to possess that which the Lord our God giveth us to possess, and to say every one for himself, *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance—the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage* *.

Thirdly, This holy doctrine is the instituted mean by which we receive grace. Faith cometh by hearing the gospel of the grace of God. Repentance, love, hope, joy, with all the graces of sanctification, are given to us and wrought in us by the Spirit in this word of grace; and by the Spirit in the same word, we are strengthened to exercise these graces, and to perform the works of new obedience which the law of Christ requires. Holy

* Psal. xvi. 5. 6.

men who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, could not give to any of the things of the Spirit of God improper designations. *Grace of God, gospel of the grace of God, dispensation of the grace of God, word of his grace*, are some of the beautiful and sublime designations, under which these men represent and commend to the world that holy doctrine, by which grace is honourably communicated, freely received, and daily exercised and increased. In the beauties which drew the eyes, and conquered the hearts, and raised the esteem and the praise of apostles and believers, graceless and natural men behold no beauty; and suppose, that virtue and obedience are more elegant terms to express the doctrine of God our Saviour. But a predilection for these despised terms, *grace*, and *word of grace*, which were suggested by the Spirit to the holy writers, will appear in all who receive abundance of grace; and the propriety of representing under such designations, a system by which grace abounds and reigns, will be acknowledged and praised as a beauty and glory in the Scripture.

Fourthly, Grace works by the doctrine of God our Saviour, and gives it efficacy and success. Since the honour of success is entirely of grace, the doctrine receives very properly a designation from it, and is called *the grace of God*, and the *word of his grace*. Men who were taught this doctrine by the Holy Spirit, who felt the power of it on their hearts and lives, and who recommended it to the world in utterance and demonstration of the Spirit, ascribed unto grace the success of their labours, and the glory of their operations. Paul was an indefatigable and successful preacher of the gospel of the grace of God. His gifts exceeded the ordinary measure, and his labours were more abundant. But gifts, and labours, and success, that exemplary
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and extraordinary man referred to the grace of God: *By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me* *.

Fifthly, This character distinguishes the gospel from the law, and grace from works. Law and gospel, though they be declarations by the same Sovereign, are different systems, and intended for different uses and purposes; and works and grace are set in opposition by Scripture, and in truth are opposite ways of seeking life and heaven: *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments; and if thou continuest in these, thou shalt live by thy works, saith the law. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, saith the gospel, and thou shalt be saved through his grace.* Scripture, foreseeing our proneness to mistake and confound these ways of living, hath laid before us the clearest descriptions of both, and given unto the gospel the only way of life to sinners, designations which distinguish it from the law, and works of the law, calling it *the doctrine of God our Saviour, and the grace of God that bringeth salvation.*

Sixthly, The doctrine of God our Saviour, or the gospel of Christ, excludes and silences boasting; and by calling it *the grace of God that bringeth salvation*, this peculiarity is set before every eye in a clear and striking light: *By grace are ye saved—not of works, lest any man should boast* †. These particulars illustrate the meaning and use, and the wisdom and beauty, of this elegant and sacred designation of the doctrine of God our Saviour, which appears in our text; and though it should continue many days under a cloud, it will break out in its ancient splendour, and according to our earnest expectation and our hope, shine over con-

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† Eph. ii. 8. 9.

tinents and islands, and raise acclamations of joy and praise, from seats of ignorance and habitations of cruelty.

According to our method of discoursing, we go on to show, how the grace of God, or the doctrine of God our Saviour, bringeth salvation. The designations, blessings, means, and medium of our salvation, are set forth and commended in the preceding Discourses. Referring to these, it is now proposed, to illustrate the beautiful turn given to the original word, with so much simplicity and justness, by our version, in the term *bringeth*; and the following particulars with respect to it will convey some useful instruction.

First, The grace or doctrine of God our Saviour bringeth to the ears of the world the report of salvation. Report is one of these terms, by which it hath pleased the Holy Spirit to express the discovery of salvation. A prophet, speaking by the Spirit of the sufferings and glory of its author, saith, *Who hath believed our report* *? and by the same Spirit, an apostle, speaking of what had been revealed to prophets, saith, *Unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them who have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven* †. This report is not vulgar rumour nor uncertain hearsay, neither is it unwritten tradition, and much less cunningly devised fable. It is a joyful sound, a faithful saying, a true report, and the record of God. For a long time it was a still small voice, and whispered in the ear of an inconsiderable family, which God brought first out of Chaldea, then redeemed from Egypt, and at last multiplied into a great nation, and by temptations, by signs, by wonders, and by war, planted in Canaan. In that chosen spot, and

* Isa. liii. 1.

† 1 Pet. i. 12.

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among that holy people, were legislators, princes, and prophets, who from time to time, by the Spirit of Christ, inquired into this salvation. By means of these the report was kept alive, and propagated from age to age in that happy land. In every other country a dead silence reigned. The whole earth was silent and still, not a whisper was heard, nor a tongue moved. But after our Lord had finished his work upon earth, and before he ascended into heaven, the ministerial commission was extended, and authority given to publish salvation through the ends of the earth and the islands of the sea : *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* — So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following *. In fulfilling the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God, the sound of these ambassadors for Christ went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world †.

Secondly, The grace or doctrine of God our Saviour bringeth before the eyes of the world the blessings of salvation. By this holy doctrine, Christ Jesus, the Lord and Saviour of the world, is evidently set forth in his personal glory and official beauty, and the rich collection of blessings in him, from the cup of water to the seat in the throne, is laid out and commended. The nature of each blessing is explained, and the properties and excellences urged as considerations and motives to allure and persuade us to receive and take possession of the whole. The light in which the grace of God sets

* Mark, xvi. 15. 16. 19. 20.

† Rom. x. 18.

salvation before the understandings of men is clear, and in it there is no darkness at all. Under the former dispensation, the light of salvation, though true light, was shaded and mixed with comparative darkness: *The light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.* When the God of salvation appeared upon his mercy-seat, he appeared in a cloud. Thick darkness was then his dwelling-place. But that darkness is now past, and the true light shineth with sevenfold brightness: *The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God*.*

Thirdly, The grace of God, or the doctrine of God our Saviour, bringeth salvation near, and places it within reach of every hand: *Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory †.* The Israelitish legislator, and the Apostle of the Gentiles, writing by the same Spirit, express this with the same precision and elegance. In the land of Moab, and a few days before his death, the former addresses the people in a very solemn and persuasive manner: *For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it ‡.*

* Psal. xcvi. 2. 3.

† Isa. xli. 12. 13.

‡ Deut. x. 11. 12. 13. 14.

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That this word which was so nigh them is the word of salvation, the doctrine of God our Saviour, or the grace of God that bringeth salvation, is illustrated and confirmed by *the latter* in an epistle to the Romans: *But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above). Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation**. From this illustration it appears, that the grace or doctrine of God our Saviour brings the report of salvation within hearing of every ear, reveals the glory of it in sight of every eye, and sets the whole collection of blessings in it within reach of every hand. And if any man have ears to hear, let him hear the joyful sound; if any man have eyes to see, let him look unto God our Saviour and be saved; and he that hath an hand to receive, let him receive the gift of God, and take the water of life freely.

We now come forward to shew the meaning of these words in the text, *hath appeared to all men*. Two things are intended by them, the *lustre* and the *extent* of the dispensation of the gospel of the grace of God.

First, The *lustre* of the dispensation of the gospel of the grace of God. When the old and the new dispensations are compared, the glory of the latter exceeds that of the former; and to express this,

* Rom. x. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

the strong word which our version renders *appeared* or *shined forth*, is used by the Apostle. The light of the grace, the doctrine or the gospel of God, dawned in paradise when the promise of the seed of the woman was given. It appeared with greater clearness to Noah, who preached to the world the righteousness of faith. Abraham believed and rejoiced in the light. Unto him was the gospel preached, and this was the text, *In thee shall all nations be blessed* *. Mount Sinai shined through the blackness, and darkness, and cloud which covered it; and the preface to the law filled the eyes of Israel with the light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ. God who thundered there, and kindled a fire which burned unto the midst of heaven, was the light, and glory, and Saviour of Israel. Among that people, however, the light of salvation shined in darkness. The Sun of righteousness never rose high, and shined always through clouds and smoke. Isaiah beheld his glory: Malachi foretold his rising: Simeon saw his salvation: John bare record: Christ said of himself, *I am the light of the world*: Apostles preached him in cities of Israel: Yet all this was no more than a *day-spring from on high* †. But upon that memorable day on which the Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven, the grace of God appeared with extraordinary splendour. The Sun of righteousness rose high, and extended his wings over the nations. By his light and heat, clouds of incense and ceremony were dissolved and blotted out, life and immortality were brought to light, and truths comparatively hid from the beginning of the gospel, were illustrated and confirmed. The obscurity of the old dispensation of the grace of God, and the lustre of the new, are contrasted by the apostle with inimitable beauty and

* Gal. iii. 8.

† Luke, i. 78.

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elegance: *Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.—We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*.*

Secondly, The extent of the dispensation of the grace of God. 'This new dispensation of it exceeds the old, not only in lustre but in extent. Under the old dispensation, the grace of God appeared to the families of Patriarchs and the tribes of Israel. Other families and nations sat in ignorance, and walked in darkness. They neither saw the glory of it with their eyes, nor heard the fame of it with their ears. But soon after the Lord Jesus entered into his glory, and sat down on the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost was shed forth abundantly, and ambassadors were sent to all nations and to every creature. The Sun of righteousness, whose motions had always been low, and whose beams had long been obscured with the smoke of burnt-offerings, and intercepted by a wall of partition, suddenly ascended and appeared in meridian altitude; and, from the rocks of Kedar, the rivers of Ethiopia, and the coasts of Chittim; from Tubal, and Javan, and the isles a-

* 2 Cor. iii. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.

far off, that had not heard his fame nor seen his glory, Gentiles saw the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, offerings of Gentiles, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, were brought unto the Lord out of all nations. Vallies were exalted, mountains were cleft, and hills levelled, crooked ways were straightened, and rough places smoothed, stones were rolled away, and stumbling-blocks were removed; the whole earth became a plain, that all flesh together, on even and equal ground, might see the light of the world going forth from the east toward the west, as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. In the east and in the west, in the north and in the south, and in the land of Sinim, in Assyria, in Egypt, in Pathros, in Cush, in Elam, in Shinar, in Hamath, in the islands of the sea, and every where, believers rejoiced in Christ Jesus, worshipped God in the Spirit, and gloried in tribulation. The grace of God hath disappeared in many places where it formerly shined. On the hills of Rome, merit has obtained a settlement, and covered kingdoms with darkness and idolatry. In the plains of Asia, sensuality has founded an empire, and forced upon millions the fooleries of Mahomet, instead of the doctrine of God our Saviour. But in the fields of Germany, the islands of Britain, the continent of America, and other parts of the earth, it is still a luminous appearance; and we are waiting for the time, in which it will again break forth as the morning, and fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Having endeavoured to ascertain and illustrate the meaning of the text, the following inferences from it are worthy of consideration.

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First, The gospel is an object of importance to mankind. Unto men perishing in sin and misery, the grace of God, or the doctrine of God our Saviour, is most interesting. Salvation to them is the one thing which is needful; and the grace of God, which brings the report of it to their ears, displays the glory of it before their eyes, and sets the blessings of it within reach of their hands, must be to them unspeakably and universally interesting. You who have believed the report, and beheld the glory, and received the blessings, are happy beyond expression; and bound with every consideration to esteem, and improve, and commend the glorious gospel, by which your riches, and honours, and titles are ascertained, and in believing which, your possession and inheritance are sealed and secured. The glory of God and compassion to the perishing, will produce in your exercise a generous concern for dark places of the earth, which are without the gospel of the grace of God, and fervent prayers and endeavours, that the dispensation of it may be extended, and sinners of all nations enlightened, enriched, and saved.

Secondly, Neither the worth nor the efficacy of the gospel is derived from man. In respect of worth, it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, nor the topaz of Ethiopia. Onyxes and sapphires need not be mentioned. The price of the grace of God is above pearls and rubies. Its worth is inestimable, and the inherent quality of the doctrine itself. The efficacy is not of man, any more than the worth. It is not by might, nor by power, the wisdom of words, nor the excellence of speech, but by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and working mightily with the word, that the fortresses of error are shaken, the walls of Jericho thrown down, and the standard of the gospel, with this motto, *The grace of God*, lifted up in kingdoms and
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in hearts. Who was Paul, and who was Apollos, but ministers by whom God wrought, and men believed? The first planted by his learning, and the last watered with his eloquence, but God gave the increase.

Thirdly, The lustre of the new dispensation of the grace of God is brighter than the old. Under the old dispensation there were light and glory. Light shined, but it shined in darkness. Glory appeared, but it appeared in a cloud and through a vail. The beams of the Sun of righteousness passed through a thick and gross atmosphere of ceremony, and were obscured by clouds of incense and pillars of smoke. In the new dispensation, this glorious Luminary appears in his meridian, and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in his face with seven-fold lustre. The light of the moon is as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun is seven-fold, as the light of seven days. Arise, shine, O Britain! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Darkness covers other parts, and gross darkness other people; but the Lord is arisen upon us, and his glory is seen upon us. If the gospel of the grace of God be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. May God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, and give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

To these inferences we shall add some words of exhortation, and conclude. You have come out from among the national body of professors, with a testimony for the gospel of the grace of God, and its pure and precious ordinances. Unless the
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measures and operations of the courts and assemblies of the church, had perverted, or tended to pervert the doctrine of God our Saviour, this would have been reprehensible and schismatical conduct. Time has discovered what was not so apparent at first, that perversion is the effect of those measures, and that discipline has not only deviated from the rule, but that doctrine is corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ. In such mournful and humbling circumstances, do not dissemble the faith for which ye contend, nor conceal the reasons which justify your conduct. Confess these openly, and by suitable and holy behaviour commend them to the world. Give no occasion unto enemies to reproach, and be not terrified at any thing they say or do against the truth. The favour of man is of small account when the truth of the gospel is in question. Do not reckon upon the expence which zeal has brought upon you. A life lost for the faith of Christ, shall be saved; and a penny laid out on his precious ordinances, shall be repaid with double interest. Be at peace among yourselves. Walk edifyingly. Look to your feet. Take heed unto your principles and morals. Give instruction to children, and acquaint them early of the difference between living by the keeping of the commandments, and living through the righteousness which is of God by faith. Suffer them not to go out into the world, ignorant and unapprised of the fatal nature of these errors, which frustrate the grace of God, and place the crown of life upon works of the law. In old age beware of coldness, either with respect to the doctrines of grace or the duties of holiness. Be sensible of the value and importance of truths, which have been the subject of confession and testimony through life; and in the faith of these, be ready to encounter death, and to receive the crown of righteousness

teousness from his hand, who loved you, and gave himself for you.

Among you there are some who read the Scripture and hear the gospel, and take pains to understand the doctrine of God our Saviour. But one thing is lacking,—They believe not in Jesus Christ, that they may be justified by the faith of Christ. Unbelievers, ye are in a very dangerous condition. I have told you often, and now tell you again, that till you be dead to the law, and married to Christ, and alive unto God, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, ye cannot see heaven. He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

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S E R M O N VII.

TITUS, ii. 12.

Teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

IT hath been long suspected, that faith and grace are popular sounds, and that all who are fond of these, are cold and deceitful friends to virtue and obedience. This suspicion, which is nearly of the same age with faith and grace, has seduced some from the truth which is after godliness, and thrown upon it a great deal of undeserved reproach. Teachers, who in other considerations appear men of real and extensive learning, biassed with jealousy of this kind, have laid aside the terms, and perverted the sense of Scripture. When legislation is substituted for salvation, and works of the law for the righteousness of Christ; when moral virtue is put into the place of the exceeding riches of grace, and sincere obedience laid in Zion for a foundation; there is not merely a change of language, but the sound of another gospel.

In a controversy which approaches so near the honour of God and the salvation of men, it is proper to try, and to try by the standard which God himself hath fixed, Whether this old and inveterate suspicion hath foundation in the grace of

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God, or doctrine of God our Saviour. Those who stand on the other side, wishing to decide by behaviour, point to blemishes which sully the conduct of believers, and to immoralities which dishonour the character of nominal adherers unto the grace of God. But this is unreasonable and unfair. The fair and rational method of coming to the knowledge of the truth, is, by descriptions of the nature and tendency of the gospel of the grace of God, which are found in Holy Scripture. When the controversy is put on this issue, we feel no uneasiness for the consequences; and affirm, without stammering and blushing, that in believers the doctrine of God our Saviour is the destroyer of the body of sin, and the restorer of the beauties of holiness: *For, saith the apostle, the grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world.*

In these words three interesting heads of discourse appear before us. Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, is one;—Living soberly, and righteously, and godly, is another;—The grace of God teaching believers of it to deny, and to live accordingly, is the third. We shall consider each of these in a separate discourse apart by itself; and in going along, you and I should depend upon the Holy Spirit, to enlighten our minds in the knowledge, and to purify our hearts through the belief of the truth.

The words, *Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*, engage our attention at present. These words are of great importance; and to believers and unbelievers, knowledge of their meaning and use is indispensably necessary. We will therefore explain
ungodliness

ungodliness in the first place, *worldly lusts* in the second, and in the third, *denying both* ungodliness and worldly lusts.

Ungodliness is to be explained in the first place. The first and great commandment of the law, requires us to love the Lord our God and Redeemer, with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength. Offences against this reasonable and holy commandment, including wickedness against man, which springs from impiety towards God, are denoted by the general term *ungodliness*. Denying in thought, in word, or in works, the being, perfection, and blessedness of the Most High, misrepresenting his decrees and operations, hard speeches against his holiness, murmuring at his providence; heresies concerning the Godhead of the Son and Holy Ghost, reviling their offices and operations in our redemption, impugning the inspiration of the Scriptures, perverting the truths revealed in these holy writings, rejecting the witness and record which God hath given and testified of Christ, and eternal life through his blood and name; going about to establish our own righteousness, and seeking salvation as it were by the works of the law; turning into lasciviousness the grace of our God, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ; neglecting to worship and glorify the only living and true God, as God, and our God; worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, changing the truth of God into a lie, and the glory of the incorruptible God into images of corruptible men, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts and creeping things; mixing with the ordinances of his worship, appointed by himself, inventions, traditions, ceremonies, and commandments of men; separating and withdrawing ourselves from true worshippers, who worship God in the Spirit,

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rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh; blaspheming his great and glorious names, dishonouring his titles, reproaching his attributes, abusing any thing by which he maketh himself known; profaning the day which the Lord hath set apart for himself, omitting, or performing carelessly, the duties in which we are commanded to sanctify it, and doing things either unlawful in themselves, or unlawful to be done on that holy day; hardening our hearts against the Lord, in pride, perversion, presumption, ingratitude, unbelief, impenitence, incorrigibleness, contradiction, and enmity, and opposition to the word, and will, and holiness of God; — these, and all other impious principles, opinions, and practices, contrary to the first table of the law of God, are comprised by the apostle in the general term *ungodliness*.

We shall explain *worldly lusts* in the next place. The second commandment, which is like unto the first, requires us, to love our neighbour as ourselves. Trespasses against this comprehensive and righteous precept, are comprised in the general expression, *worldly lusts*. In explaining it, we shall first speak of *lusts*, and then of the quality *worldly*, which the apostle mentions and places before *lusts*.

Lusts are evil inclinations, including evil works, which proceed from these evil inclinations. Lusts of the flesh, and works of the flesh, are synonymous expressions. This extensive meaning and use of the term *lusts*, may be illustrated by the transgressions of each commandment in the second table of the holy law. Cursing, mocking, despising parents, among children; disobeying, contemning, and railing at masters, among servants; seditious and disloyal principles and conduct, among subjects; cruelty, rigour, oppression, ambition, and tyranny, among parents, masters, and rulers; emulations, swellings, tumults, and love of pre-eminence, among

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mong equals; are motions and operations of the lusts of men, perverting and pressing into their service the powers of the mind and the members of the body. Taking away the life, and defaming and wounding the name of a neighbour, pride, anger, wrath, clamour, variance, contention, fierceness, hatred, revenge, are lusts, or roots of bitterness, springing up in our hearts, and branching out, and bearing gall and wormwood in our lives. Gluttony, drunkenness, immodesty, wantonness, filthy communications, whoredom, adultery, and all uncleanness, are burnings in the sinful body, kindled and fanned by lusts; and unless the fire be quenched and put out by the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, lusts will daily cast fuel into it, till the flesh and the body be consumed. Theft, robbery, bribery, fraud, deceit, villany, extortion, dissipation, gaming, are excesses and depredations committed upon the property of neighbours, by these brutal and rapacious enemies, the lusts of men. Perjury, lying, dissimulation, whispering, slandering, backbiting, prevaricating, evil-speaking, surmising, tale-bearing, are the desperate ravages of the false and hollow hearted, in foraging and laying up provision for their deceitful lusts. Covetousness, greediness, inordinate affections, envy, bitterness, uncharitableness, an evil eye, discontentment, are commotions raised and fomented by worldly lusts, these greedy dogs, that never have enough, and never will be satisfied.

Lusts are mentioned under several qualities. Deceitful lusts, divers lusts, youthful lusts, fleshly lusts, foolish and hurtful lusts, ungodly lusts; but in the text Paul fixes upon *worldly*, and of this quality the following account is given: *First*, Lusts are of the world: *The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but*

is of the world*. These evil inclinations, which work in our members, are neither raised by our Creator, nor supported by our Preserver. They are contrarieties to his nature and will, and belong to this present evil world, which is lying in wickedness, and which, under his wrath and curse, is hastening to dissolution. *Secondly*, This world is the place where lusts conceive and bring forth. Some persons take designations from the country which gave them birth; and lusts are very properly designed worldly, since the world is both the place where they are born and brought up, and the place in which they likewise conceive and bring forth sin and death. *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death†.* *Thirdly*, Lusts reign in men of the world. Men of the world, is one of the designations given to the men who are earthly and sensual; and who, according to the course of this world, fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind. In these men, lusts are reigning inclinations; and over the powers of the soul, and the members of the body, exercise a tyranny by which both are enslaved. Men who are spiritually minded, and whose conversations are in heaven, feel in their members, motions and operations of lusts, and complain loudly of their violence and tyranny. *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death‡?* But in them, as in men of the world, lusts have not the force of enslaving and reigning principles. Once, indeed, they were servants of sin, and free from righteousness; but now, being made free from sin, and become servants of righteousness, they have fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. *Fourth-*

* 1 John, ii. 16.

† James, i. 15.

‡ Rom. vii. 23. 24.

ly, Lusts feed upon the world, and grow thick and fat, by rioting among its pleasures. Meat and drink, and other good things pertaining to this life, God hath created to be received, with thanksgiving, of them who believe and know the truth; but by men of the world, who serve divers lusts and pleasures, the use of these good things is perverted. Lusts, which we are commanded to starve and to mortify, and for which we are forbidden to make provision, are fed with them, until the grave be digged, and the mouth of hell opened to receive the luster. Past ages, so far as records of these are come down, furnish a multitude of examples of this humbling observation; and the present age, so far as we are acquainted in it, is apparently adding millions to the multitude. With the Bible in our houses, and with every instituted help to understand and to obey the will of God in our offer, men are walking in lasciviousness, inflaming themselves with wine and strong drink, and fattening their lusts upon good things, which earth produces, and which commerce brings home.

Having illustrated the meaning and use of the terms *ungodliness* and *worldly lusts*;—*denying* these is to be explained in the *third* place. This strong word shall be considered with respect to ungodliness first, and then with respect to worldly lusts.

With respect to ungodliness, we are taught by the doctrine of God our Saviour, bound by his law, and constrained and allured by his love, *First*, To renounce impious principles, and to forbear impious and ungodly deeds. Impiety is a false and immoral system. None of its principles will be deliberately admitted and adopted among believers. If any of these be forced into their minds in an hour of temptation, they do not become fixed and operative principles, and are soon renounced and
thrown.

thrown up, with confusion of face and vexation of spirit. A good man, looking at the prosperity and wealth of the ungodly, and feeling his own affliction and misery, exclaimed, *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency.* But this hard word, which indirectly impeached the justice of Providence, is retracted almost as soon as it is uttered. *If I say, I will speak thus, behold I should offend the generation of thy children*.* In another evil hour, expostulation, which reflected on the mercy, love, and faithfulness of God, is repressed and renounced by the same holy believer. *And I said this is my infirmity †.* Impious and ungodly writings, speeches, and actions, fruits of ungodly and impious principles, are contrary to the nature and tendency of the gospel. By it believers are restrained from stepping into the seat of scorers, standing in the way of sinners, and walking in the council of the ungodly. Nor can professors venture upon the doing of an impious deed, or join themselves to an impious company, without contradicting and blaspheming this holy doctrine. *Secondly,* To detest and abhor the principles of the impious, and the work of the ungodly. Their principles are false, and among lovers and believers of truth, falsehoods and lies are objects of detestation. Their work is immoral; and to the virtuous and holy, immorality is an abhorrence. *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them who turn aside, it shall not cleave to me ‡. I have hated the congregation of evil-doers, and will not sit with the wicked ||. Do not I hate them, O Lord, who hate thee? and am not I grieved with those who rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies **.* Behold the fruit of gracious principles, and the

* Psal. lxxiii. 12.—15.

† Psal. lxxvii. 7.—10.

‡ Ib. ci. 3.

|| Ib. xxvi. 5.

** Ib. cxxxix. 21. 22.

feelings.

feelings of godly men, when the law is insulted, and the grace of God abused, by the boldness of impiety, and the insolence of ungodliness. *Thirdly*, To mortify inclinations and motions of our heart toward impious principles, and impious conduct. The doctrine of God our Saviour hath, in its bosom, the authority of his law. In the dispensation of it, the precepts of this holy law are in force, and bind receivers of his grace to deny and repress, to mortify and crucify every ungodly and impious inclination as it rises in their hearts. At present we are not speaking of what is done, but of what the grace of God teaches and commands to be done; and do not you know and believe that it commands men, by whom it is received, to fight against inclinations to evil; forbids them to dwell in tents of impiety; and debars them from approaching toward territories of Atheism and profaneness. *Fourthly*, To deny ourselves the pleasures of profane and impious company. *Depart from me, ye evil doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God* *. *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path* †. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness* ‡. Unto these instructions, it is our duty and interest to give the most earnest heed. Pleasure in profane and impious company, is the gangrene of a good conversation, and usually brings on universal and incurable mortifications. Under this bewitching and stupifying distemper, professors, apparently sound in faith, and lovely and useful in manners, have pined and rotted away in their own corruptions, and on death-beds become more offensive and unsavoury to holy souls, than the rankest cadaverous smell can be to our nostrils. Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good man-

* Psal. cxix. 115.

† Prov. i. 10. 15.

‡ Eph. v. 11.

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ners, and companions of fools shall be destroyed. *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness; than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire*.*

With respect unto worldly lusts, we are taught by the doctrine of God our Saviour, bound by his law, and drawn and constrained by his love, *first*, To abstain from worldly lusts. Our own, and other men's honour, life, chastity, property, name, with every thing pertaining to us and to them, are guarded by righteous and holy statutes. Every deed which operates against any or all of these is an injury to them, and to ourselves, in one consideration, and in another consideration, is a sin against the Lord our God and Redeemer. The doctrine of God our Saviour, which asperges no character, but gives every man his proper designation, calls transgressors of these holy commandments, evil-doers, and exhorts and presses receivers of its grace and truth, to separate themselves from their company, and to abstain from the inordinate and vehement affections and lusts which flame out among them in such indecent and flagrant immoralities. *Secondly*, To detest and abhor worldly lusts. In the eyes of the Lord, these lusts are abominations, and beheld with detestation and abhorrence. Against these the doctrine of God our Saviour lifts up a standard, and instructs godly men who assemble under it, to stand firm, and oppose the

* 2 Pet. ii. 20. 21. 22.

motions and operations of the enemy with hatred and indignation. A garment spotted by the flesh, is not meet for the shoulders of Christians, and the hating of it is a duty bound upon them by the law of Christ. Abhor that which is evil. With the grace of God, or the truth which is after godliness, the commandments on the second table of the law are embodied; and trespasses against them are an abhorrence to those by whom this grace or truth is received and acknowledged. *I hate the work of them that turn aside*, is the protestation of a man who had received abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness; and as he hated the congregation of evil-doers, he would neither stand, nor sit, nor eat, nor work among them. *Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties* *. *Thirdly*, To resist and mortify the inclinations and motions of worldly lusts, as these rise and operate in our hearts. The grace or doctrine of God our Saviour, not only raises its voice in the world against all unrighteousness of men; but enters into the close places and innermost recesses of the soul, and calls upon receivers of this grace to resist the first motions of lust. Observe the address unto the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse. *Mortify your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; and put out of your mouth anger, wrath, blasphemy, and filthy communication, and lie not one to another*. To mortify our members, which are upon the earth, this holy doctrine furnishes motives and powers, as well as prescribes precepts and rules. *If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live* †. *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for*

* Psal. cxli. 4.

† Rom. viii. 13.

it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell*. Fourthly, To separate and withdraw ourselves from fellowship with men in their worldly lusts. Living to the lusts of men, and to the will of God, are contrary motions and operations in life and manners. Men of the world, who mind earthly things, and whose portion is in this life, are dangerous companions to those whose affections are on things above, and whose conversation is in heaven. The doctrine, which is according to godliness, calls loudly, *Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing*†. The man after God's own heart withdrew, and joined himself to the opposite body. *I am a companion of all them who fear thee, and of them who keep thy precepts*‡. Aversion to the company of the world should not be imputed unto distaste to the innocent pleasures of society, affected preciseness, weak scrupulosity, or monkish austerity, and gloominess of temper and manners. This aversion is raised and maintained by the spirit of holiness, and is weaker or stronger according to his influence and operation on the heart. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies*§.

We shall conclude with some general inferences and exhortations. And first, In Scripture there are sums of obedience, which is the fulfilling of the law, and sums of iniquity, which is the transgression of the law: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all*

* Matt. v. 29 30.

† Psal. cxix. 63.

‡ 2 Cor. vi. 17.

§ Psal. cxxxix. 21. 22.

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thy strength, and with all thy mind, and shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. This is a sum of obedience, and the whole duty of man. Ungodliness and worldly lusts, or according to the terms used by the same apostle in another epistle, *all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, are sums of iniquity. Ungodliness is the sum of iniquity against the first and great commandment of the law. Worldly lusts, or unrighteousness of men, are general expressions, which comprise all that is done against the second great commandment of the same holy law.

Secondly, The grace of God which bringeth salvation is not an immoral doctrine. Neither impiety against God, nor unrighteousness against man, is authorised, permitted, or encouraged in this gracious system. So far is it from authorising, permitting, or encouraging immorality, that it declares war against all iniquity, pursues it into the close places of the heart, and furnishes armour to dethrone and to destroy every lust. The young man unto whom the epistle where our text stands is addressed, had been left in a little infamous island. From the filthy conversation of these beastly islanders, the faith and manners of the believers among them were both in danger. Paul perceived the danger; and among instructions to Titus, inserted a description of the gospel of the grace of God, by which its contrariety to all iniquity might be clearly and easily understood. This description and these instructions have been imported into our own island; and, at present, are as necessary to the believers in Britain, as formerly they were unto the believers in Crete.

Thirdly, The grace of God when turned into lasciviousness, is perverted and abused. Truth is perverted and abused, when men who pretend to be friends and admirers of it practically turn the current of its influence a contrary way, and encourage

rage themselves to continue in sin, that grace may abound. The truth which is after godliness, bends its whole force against lasciviousness; turns believers and receivers of it from wantonness and whoredom; and carries the inclinations of their hearts to whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report. Among us, few are under the power of such strong delusion, as to hold in theory, that the grace of God inclines to lust and lasciviousness; or, that by drinking freely of this pure and holy river of the water of life, men intoxicate themselves, and work all uncleanness with greediness. But many, while they justly damn the theory, perversely approve the practice; and by walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable impurities, abuse and pervert the grace of God, and holding truth in unrighteousness, drown themselves in destruction and perdition. These are spots and blemishes among Christians, and sport themselves with their own deceivings; having eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin, and hearts exercised with covetous practices; these, as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, shall utterly perish in their own corruption.

Fourthly, The grace of God is not without law, and much less is it contrary to law. With this holy system the law of Christ is embodied; and against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, the whole force of that law is exerted in the dispensation of the manifold grace of God. In an apology for variations in his behaviour, Paul touches upon this point incidentally: *Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ*. Instead of tempting believers to commit hostilities against God or man, the grace of God teaches them to deny ungodliness

ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to resist with the armour of righteousness, and the force and authority of law, every inclination to trespass upon the honour of the Sovereign, or to invade the rights of his vassal.

Unto these inferences we add the following exhortations. Persons who are interested in the salvation which the grace of God brings before the world, we exhort to deny, as they have been taught, ungodliness, and worldly lusts. Consider, O saved believers, your privileges in Christ! From the curse of the law you have been redeemed unto God. Unto the Lord our righteousness, who is the end of the law, you have been married. From the guilt of sin you have been set free, and from its dominion you have been delivered. Unto God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, you reckon yourselves alive; and as Christ died unto sin, you likewise reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin. These are your privileges; and by the possession and improvement of these, you are furnished with gracious and operative means, to incline and enable you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.—Consider the authority of the law of Christ. It is your honour and interest to be under this law, the precepts of which are both bonds of authority and cords of love. These reasonable, righteous, and holy precepts, oppose their force against ungodliness and worldly lusts, and command you to resist them as enemies and evils. By the authority of Christ exerted, and by the love of Christ appearing in his law, those who are under it, are bound and constrained to depart from iniquity, and to follow after righteousness and godliness.—Consider the design of redemption: Christ gave himself for you, that he might redeem you from all iniquity. From the guilt and from the dominion of iniquity, and from

the wrath which it deserves, you are redeemed; redeemed not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. After this, what have you to do with the love and practice of iniquity? If you stretch out your hand to it, or if you regard it in your heart, you attempt to counterwork him who loved you, and gave himself for you. When sinners entice, and the enemy tempts; when lust begins to burn, and opportunity presents itself; against these combined powers hold up the shield, crying, How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? — Consider the hurt which you must receive from ungodliness and worldly lusts. The principles of the ungodly, the lusts of men, and the manners of the world, will weaken your spiritual life, indispose you for duty, defile your conscience, wound your reputation, occasion enemies to defame your profession, and when you are dead, give an ill savour to your name in the church. On these considerations, we exhort and intreat, that you deny, as you are taught by the grace of God to deny, ungodliness and worldly lusts.

You who are uninterested in the salvation which the grace of God brings before the world, are in a situation where it is dangerous to continue, and where no wise man will choose to rest. From heaven, the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Unto this wrath the unrighteous and ungodly are exposed, and against it they are able to make no defence. To flee from it you have been often warned; but hitherto the warning has been despised; and at this moment you stand exposed, naked, and defenceless. Inquiries concerning the way to escape, and diligence in using means to escape, are favourable and promising appearances. But among you where are these to be seen? Careless and perishing creatures, will

will ye never be serious in thinking of your souls, nor in earnest to find Christ, who saves from sin and delivers from wrath? Is the Saviour of the world unworthy to be inquired after by sinners? Is his righteousness unworthy to be put on by them who have none of their own? Is his grace unworthy to be received by them who are miserable and destitute; or is his salvation unworthy to be regarded by them who are lost? His own invitations, though these should once more be refused, we will repeat: *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely* *.

* Isa. xlv. 22.; John, vii. 37.; Rev. xxii. 17.

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S E R M O N VIII.

TITUS, ii. 12.

Teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

IN the defence which Peter made of his conduct in the city of Cæsarea, and the house of Cornelius, the doctrine of God our Saviour is defined elegantly, though incidentally, Words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. To mankind, perishing in sin and misery, knowledge of this doctrine is necessary, and preaching it is a mean by which knowledge is taught and diffused; *for after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe* *. Grace of God, and gospel of the grace of God, are well known definitions and characters of the same holy doctrine.

What is, and what is not gospel, are interesting and serious inquiries. Upon these, men are divided, and far from being of one mind. Some throw grace out of the gospel, and make it a law requiring good works as conditions of acceptance with God, and of enjoying eternal life in his presence; and some throw law out of the gospel, and would

* 1 Cor. i. 21.

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have it grace, in which good works are of no consideration. In the instructions to Titus, Paul has an eye to each of these perversions, and sends into Crete a description of the gospel, from which it appears that the grace of God, and the law of God, though distinct collections of truth, are under the hand of the same administrator, and used in the same administration. That the gospel is not law separated from grace, is evident from his calling it the grace of God; and that it is not grace separated from law, is evident from his saying, it teaches men to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

When the apostle describes the vices which believers are taught by the grace of God to deny, he begins with ungodliness, which is the transgression of the first table of the law, and ends with worldly lusts, which are operations and motions of sin, in opposition to the second table of the law. When he describes the virtues which believers are taught, by the grace of God, to practise, the order is inverted; he begins with sobriety and righteousness, which are the duties of the second table of the law, and ends with godliness, which is the fulfilling of the first table of the law.

Living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, is to be our theme in this discourse. We shall explain, first, Sobriety;—then, Righteousness;—and, last, Godliness.—After these are explained, we shall exhort, first, to live soberly, then to live righteously, and last, to live godly, in this present world. May the Holy Spirit, by his presence and power, make the word profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that in speaking and hearing it, speaker and hearers may

may be perfected and thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Sobriety is one of those virtues which gives beauty and polish to manners, and which recommends to the love and esteem of mankind persons whom it adorns. We shall consider it with respect to thought, speech, desire, and enjoyment. *First, In thought.* Sobriety is the modest opinion which a good man hath of himself, and of all in him that is excellent, and worthy of praise. When sober thinking is recommended, we are warned against thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought; *for I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith**. In this recommendation, thinking soberly of ourselves, and thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, contrast each other. By this position, the eye possessing the advantage of beholding both at the same glance, perceives the deformity of the one, appearing more ugly from the beauties which shine round the other. *Secondly, In speech.* Sobriety is the measured and decent language, in which a modest and well-bred Christian speaks of himself, his qualities, attainments, and works. Though conscious of superiority in many qualities truly and eminently gracious, he disclaims every idea of merit, and even withdraws and hides himself from just praise. Paul is anxiously zealous to avoid appearances of ostentation, and noisy and pompous exaggerations of his services and labours among men. *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves:—we will not boast of things without our measure, we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure†.* When he

* Rom. xii. 3.

† 2 Cor. x. 12. 13. 14.

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speaks of his privileges and attainments as a believer in Christ, or of his labours and successes as an ambassador for Christ, this modest and exemplary man uses terms the most measured, refers the glory to grace, and sets before the church an edifying example of sobriety and humility. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me. I laboured; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. I planted, but God gave the increase. We are not sufficient of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. Behold the man whose education raised him above the common level; whose learning was so various and classical; whose measure of grace was so large; whose stock of gifts was so rich; whose labours were so abundant; whose sufferings were so numerous; whose success was so great; whose attainments were so high; and who, in the race of obedience and self-denial, left his contemporaries behind him: — Behold him exemplifying, in sober and temperate terms, that lowliness of mind which he recommended to others; and in comparative humility, falling so low as to reckon himself the least of the apostles, and less than the least of all saints. *Thirdly*, In desire. Sobriety is the moderate affection toward things on earth, which prevails among men whose conversations are in heaven. Inordinate affection to these things is the contrary quality. The sober-minded are content with the portion which their heavenly Father bestows, and do not allow in themselves inordinate motions and affections toward any good things bestowed on others, by the same sovereign and bountiful hand. Nor is this all: The world is crucified to them, and the love of it is mortifying and dying in their hearts. Knowing that the fashion of it is passing away, they possess this world as though they possessed not, and use without abusing whatever they possess. If they have estates in land,

land, money in the bank, or a stock in trade, their affections notwithstanding are set on things above; and of things below, their desires are sober and temperate, differing widely from the desires of the men who mind earthly things. *Fourthly*, In enjoyment. Sobriety is the moderate use of things pertaining to this life. The sober man enjoys decently, and according to his rank, that world unto which he is crucified and dead, as a Christian; but in the enjoyment of it is a very different person, in heart, speech, and behaviour, from men of the world, who feed in it as their pasture, and in riotous indulgences abuse themselves with its luxuries. He is temperate in all things, and keeps the body, and its desires and appetites, under subjection and rule. Disintangled from perplexing and anxious cares, and mortified to pleasure and recreation, he is sober in the use of innocent and necessary things, and by his temperate and guarded conduct, convinces men that he is using these things as means to spiritual ends.

Righteousness comprises good works done in obedience to the commandments of the second table of the law. Duties which belong unto the honour, life, family, estate, name, and property of our neighbour, whether he be superior, inferior, or our equal, enter into this righteousness: And the following account of it may be considered. *First*, It is righteousness of saints. By no other persons is it wrought, and among no other description of men is it found. Appearances of this righteousness may be counterfeited, and deeds in it performed among the unholy. Some of these are dutiful and kind relations, humane and obliging neighbours, sober, temperate, and chaste, just and honest, and charitable, and in every consideration blameless, exemplary, and righteous before men. But what saith the law-giver? *I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works,*
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for they shall not profit thee *. According to Scripture, which always speaks truth, workers of righteousness are men in Christ, fellow-citizens with the saints, and born from above; and all who are not of this spiritual and holy fellowship, belong to the congregation of evil-doers, and will be sent away among workers of iniquity. *Secondly*, This righteousness is the fruit of the Spirit. *The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth* †. In themselves, the saints are without operative powers, and can do no good works. All the works of their righteousness are performed by the power of the Spirit of Christ working in them mightily. By his Holy Spirit they are inclined to work righteousness. By the same divine power they are enabled to work righteousness, and in working it, refreshed with his consolations. His operation and influence are not confined to walks of obedience toward God, within the first division of the law. In the paths of righteousness toward man, these are wanted; and by the Spirit, saints are led, and strengthened, and refreshed through the several windings and turnings of the way, and the several places where they are set and commanded to work. *Thirdly*, The commandments in the second division of the holy law is the rule of this righteousness. From beginning to end, this rule is perfect and straight; and in it is no crookedness at all. As many as walk according to it, are straight and undefiled in the way; and all their works are done in truth and uprightness. By this line workers of righteousness measure the works of their righteousness, and number among their misdoings those which are short or crooked. The commandments are holy, just, and good: Saints love them exceedingly. To the observation of these they lift up their hearts, and know that in keeping

* 1st. lvii. 12.

† Eph. v. 9.

them

them there is great reward. In their purity and spirituality, they delight after the inward man; and before they dare venture upon doing, wish to be satisfied that the law requires or allows the deed. *Fourthly*, This righteousness is not perfect. In the righteousness of the holiest saints, there are spots and blemishes, and after all their care and pains they reckon it filthy rags. Noah was perfect in his generation. Job was a perfect and an upright man. The heart of David was perfect with the Lord his God. Hezekiah walked before the Lord in truth, and with a perfect heart. But to preserve us from error in interpreting the term perfect, Scripture records faults in the lives of these same good men. Noah was overcome by the love of wine. Job uttered that which he understood not. Fleshly lusts brought David into captivity to the law of sin. And pride of heart rose upon Hezekiah, and trampled him in the mire. The best of men are but men at the best. In the purest hearts there is uncleanness, and upon the whitest and cleanest conversations, are spots and stains which nothing can take out but the blood, and spirit, and intercession of Christ. *Fifthly*, Justification is not through this righteousness. In acceptance with God, the law sustains no righteousness which is imperfect, and refuses to compound for an half or a third of the obedience and sufferings which the guilty are owing, or for any lower or higher dividends. Paul, though strongly attached to his own righteousness, finding by operations of the law on his conscience, and motions of sin in his members, that his righteousness could not justify, wisely gave it up, and looked another way: *I count all things but loss, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness*

which

which is of God by faith *. *Sixthly*, This righteousness is evidence to men, of justification before God. Unless works of righteousness appear in our conversations, we are not able to prove ourselves to be justified by the righteousness which is of God by faith. In this consideration, a holy writer, who could not pervert nor misrepresent truth, contends, that the father of believers, and the harlot of Jericho, were both justified by their works; and concludes it to be an incontrovertible truth, that believers are justified, not in the sight of the Lord, but before the world, by works, and not by faith only †. *Seventhly*, Through Christ Jesus this righteousness is an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. Under the old dispensation, relieving the widow, defending the fatherless, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, speaking truth to neighbours, and executing righteousness and judgement, for the oppressed, were preferred to altars and burnt-offerings. Under the new dispensation, communicating and doing good, are declared to be sacrifices with which God is well-pleased; and visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, are pronounced to be pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father. *Eighthly*, Without this righteousness no man shall be saved. Concerning its necessity, the decisions of Scripture are express and peremptory. *Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord* ‡. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God* §. *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God* **. Had you all knowledge and

* Philip. iii. 7.—9.

† James, ii. 20.—26.

‡ Heb. xii. 14.

§ 1 Cor. vi. 9.

** Eph. v. 5.

all faith, could you fight for the condition of the covenant, give your bodies to be burned for imputed righteousness, and speak for the doctrine of grace, with the tongues of men and of angels; if you be stubborn and rebellious children, who obey not the voice of their father and mother; if you be hard-hearted and uncharitable, pluck the fatherless from the breast, or take the widow's ox for a pledge; if you withdraw the sheaf from the hungry, or shut up bowels of compassion against the cry of the poor; if you cause the naked to lodge without clothing, or to embrace the rocks for want of shelter; if you be unjust and deceitful in your dealing, or break your promises, and swear falsely by the name of the Lord; if you be intemperate, incontinent, and lascivious, cruel, contentious, wrathful, and proud; if you be tale-bearers, back-biters, ill-speakers, and liars; if your hearts be exercised with covetous practices; if the furrows of your land be complaining and crying out against you; if gold be your hope, and fine gold your confidence; and if you die under the dominion of these lusts and corruptions, you cannot see the face of God in heaven.

Godliness is the sum of obedience to the first division of the law. Believing the record which God hath given of his Son, and of salvation through his blood and name, loving, fearing, and serving him as the Lord, and our God and Redeemer; dependence upon him for the performance of the promises; subjection to his Providence; prayer, confession, thanksgiving, and praise; reading and hearing his word; receiving and observing his ordinances; worshipping and glorifying him in the beauty of holiness; trusting and rejoicing in his name; reverencing and honouring his titles and attributes; sanctifying and keeping holy that day which he hath set apart for himself, are exercises of

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of godliness or spiritual services which godly men delight to perform. In an holy conversation, godliness is the first of the beauties, and gives to the rest that lustre which distinguishes them from, and raises them above moral and philosophical virtues. It is accordingly frequently and earnestly recommended by the holy writers. *Exercise thyself unto godliness* *. *Be in behaviour as becometh godliness* †. *Lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness* ‡. *What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness* ||. *Godliness, with contentment, is great gain* **. *O man of God, follow after godliness* ††. *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come* ††. *Add to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness* |||. These recommendations are addressed both to officers and to members of the church. Duty, and interest, and honour, unite and raise their voice, and call upon preachers and hearers to obey the words of the Lord Jesus, and the doctrine which is according to godliness. Godly preachers are blessings to godly hearers; and godly hearers are comforts to godly preachers, and help them forward with their lives and their prayers. Do we believe that godliness is profitable unto all things, let us exercise ourselves to it, and follow after it in holy conversations. To encourage us in this, the Lord hath set apart him that is godly; for himself knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and is an help when the godly fail.

Having explained sobriety, righteousness, and godliness; we shall now exhort, first, to live soberly in this present world; then to live righteously; and last, to live godly. Beloved, our exhortation is not

* 1 Tim. iv. 7.

† 1 Tim. ii. 10.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 2.

|| 2 Pet. iii. 11.

** 1 Tim. vi. 6.

†† 1b. vi. 11.

†† 1 Tim. iv. 8.

||| 2 Pet. i. 6. 7.

of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile; but as we are allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we would speak, not as pleasing men, but God who trieth our hearts. May the Holy Spirit incline your ears to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, refine by it your taste for holiness, and prepare you unto every good work.

Live soberly in this present world, and soberly *every where and every day*. In thought, in word, in desire, and in enjoyment, be sober *every where*. Be sober in the *closet*, where you are alone with God, and strike down before the high and lofty One, every high thought as it begins to rise and exalt itself. When Abraham stood before him, his thoughts of himself were low, and his language was humble: *Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes* *. When David sat before him, self-excellence, with all that was magnificent in his crown and diadem, disappeared: *Who am I, O Lord God? and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto* †? When Asaph went into his sanctuary, he perceived the vanity of inordinate affection, and set his heart upon him, as the only desirable good: *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I desire besides thee* ‡. Be sober in the family, and before households set examples of modesty, humility, and self-denial. By these some may be won, and, through the grace of God, inclined and enabled to follow. Of domestic sobriety, David vowed to give an example to his kingdom: *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way: O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart* ||. He did well to have this in his heart, though in performing he failed, to the scan-

* Gen. xviii. 27.

† Psal. lxxiii. 25.

‡ 2 Sam. vii. 18.

|| Psal. ci. 2.

dal of the whole kingdom, in very humbling and notorious instances. Be sober in the *temple* where you worship the high and lofty One. Let not vanity, filthiness, nor superfluity of naughtiness come within the walls of his house. In his sight, a proud heart and an high look are abominations which he abhors; and an humble spirit and a contrite heart are sacrifices which he will not despise. The whole force of the gospel is pointed against the loftiness of man: *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ* *. By these holy weapons, the high towers which the proud raise in honour of themselves, and from which they think of flying on wings of their own to the throne of God, shall be brought down, laid low, and buried in the dust: *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.*—*And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day* †. Behold the lofty Pharisee prostrate on the ground, and the splendid works which he imagined would have stood as the days of heaven, tumbling down on every side, covering him with confusion, and filling him with consternation: *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do* ‡? But out of these ruins a glorious superstructure soon appeared, raising its top to Christ at the right hand of God, and sinking its foot lower than the least of the saints: *What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things,*

* 2 Cor. x. 4. 5.

† Isa. ii. 11. 17.

‡ Acts, ix. 6.

and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ†. Be sober in the market, where you have business with sons of riot and intemperance. By moderation, convince them of the wisdom and beauty of sobriety; and that though you use the glass, the fear of God restrains you from taking a glass too much. Give no occasion to any who are of the world, to think, that though by your profession the world is crucified to you, and you to the world, yet love to the things of the world is the ruling passion in your transactions, and hath dominion over your heart. Do the business of this world, as men who are not of this world, and whose conversations are in heaven. Commit to memory, and carry to every place of trade, these holy words: *Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead to sin and to the world, and your life is hid with Christ in God‡.* The illustrious strangers were men of business and traffic. They bought and sold, followed their flocks and digged wells; plowed, and sowed, and reaped; made purchases, ratified covenants, and grew rich; but they did these things in a way which declared plainly that they desired the heavenly and better country||.

Live soberly every day. It is not enough that we be sober on the day of the Lord, and some other days of religious solemnity: We should be so, and

* Phil. iii. 7.—10.

† Col. iii. 2, 3.

‡ Eph. iii. 8.

|| Heb. xi. 13.—17.

appear to be so every day. On the *wedding-day* live soberly, and join trembling with your mirth. Sobriety in heart, speech, and behaviour, is not an enemy to mirth and cheerfulness; but if you be inattentive to the motions of the mind, the subject of discourse, and the law of holiness, youth, liquor, lust, and temptation, will find occasions, and hurry you into rude and unseemly behaviour. Like charity, sobriety never behaves itself unseemly. Among fools, when they are filled with meat, the wedding-frolic is natural and common sport; but among saints whom Christ has betrothed, espoused, and married to himself, and bound to behave themselves every day as becometh holiness, appearances of levity and foolishness are familiarities with the world which are unseemly and dangerous. On the *fair-day* live soberly. In buying and selling, and in eating and drinking, appear men of determined and exemplary sobriety. Be not ashamed of conformity to Christ among open enemies, nor among hollow and deceitful friends. Let those who deal with you see, that you are in every transaction advised by discretion and guided by principle; and that you hold it below your dignity as men, and your duty as Christians, to riot in the day-time, and sit at night until wine inflame you. On the *feast-day* live soberly. Sobriety is not at variance with decent and social pleasures. A stiff and monkish austerity of temper, is a blight in manners, which spoils the pleasure and liveliness of society, and wounds the feelings of friendship and love. While ye endeavour to avoid this, with equal solicitude guard against the contrary extreme, by sinking the friendly visit in dissipation and folly. To eat like a glutton, and to drink like a drunkard, will disable you to perform the duties of religion, unfit you to enjoy the pleasures of friendship, and sink you lower than beasts which perish.

Live

Live righteously in this present world, and righteously *every where*, and *every day*, and in *every company*. Live righteously *every where*. Whether we live in the city or the country, in the stately palace or the mean cottage, in the populous village or the solitary glen, loving and working righteousness are duties by which we are bound to glorify God, and to edify men. The reasonable and holy law of the Lord our God and Redeemer, is not a collection of local statutes, which bind to obedience only in certain districts or provinces of his kingdom: Its obligation extends over all his dominions upon earth. In whatever corner your houses stand, and whatever relation you bear to society, the Lord commands you to honour parents, and obey magistrates; to love wives, and submit to husbands; to please masters, and give wages to servants; to oblige relations, to relieve the oppressed, and shew mercy to the poor; to keep appointments, perform promises, and pay debts; to preserve your own and your neighbours life, chastity, estate, and good name; to speak truth, follow peace, provide for your own, and to be content with such things as ye have.

Live righteously *every day*. On holy days and ordinary days; on private days and public days; on market days and wedding days; on days of feasting and of fasting; of mirth and of sorrow; of health and of sickness; of prosperity and of adversity; of light and of darkness; of wealth and of poverty; you ought to appear in the clean linen, which is the righteousness of saints. Let thy garments be always white, and embroidered with judgement, mercy, and truth. Among saints, righteousness is always fashionable; and without it they never are like themselves. Having put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put

on.

on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth, walk every day in these holy garments, and enrich and adorn them more and more, with new beauties of divers colours of needle-work on both sides. Delivered from the law, and out of the hand of enemies, married to him who is raised from the dead, and accepted in his righteousness; serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of your life. A righteous life, though not the ground, is the evidence of justification before God, and of interest in the inheritance of saints. From heaven, righteous men receive daily divine smiles while they live, and through Jesus Christ have hope in God when they die.

Live righteously in *every company*. In sober and good company, in riotous and bad company, among righteous men and among deceitful workers, you are under law to Christ. Righteous conversations among unrighteous neighbours and companions, are garments of glory and beauty, and blessed are they who keep them clean and undefiled. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, which was wicked and profane; and behold how he is honoured and preserved by heaven: *The Lord said unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy house into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation* *. Lot escaped the pollutions which were in Sodom through lust; and many years after his death a mark of honour is set upon his character, more lasting than the hill to which he was commanded to flee: *God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes—And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds* †. To come out of filthy

* Gen. vii. 1.

† 2 Pet. ii. 6. 7. 8.

company

company unstained with the conversation of the wicked, is an honourable and glorious escape. Never choose to go into it; but if business call you in, be very vigilant and sober; and when business is done, open the door and escape for your integrity, leaving behind an example of the vigour of principle and the beauty of holiness.

Live godly in this present world, and godly *every where*, and *every day*. *Every where* live godly. In *closets and solitary places* pray to your Father who seeth in secret, and you shall be rewarded openly. Read his holy word, which shews unto sinners the way of salvation. Meditate upon his righteous law day and night, and believe the glorious gospel, in which life and immortality are brought to the light. A life spent in acknowledging his being, perfection, and blessedness; in adoring his purposes, promises, and operations; in believing his record, submitting to his will, and beholding his glory in the face of Christ, is a life of honour and pleasure. Live godly in *families*. In these little sanctuaries, present unto the Lord, evening and morning every day, offerings of righteousness and sacrifices of praise. Before the eyes of households display the practical beauties of godly conversations, and afford them reasonable means of conviction, that the love and fear of God are the supreme motives by which you are influenced, and his glory the great end to which your actions are directed. Walk with God in the *temple*, and behold and admire the majesty of his steps and goings in the worship and solemnities of his sanctuary: *Thy way, O God*, cried an ancient finger in an hour of perplexity, *is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God that doest wonders**. Attend the ordinances, by which his name is recorded and made known; and attend not to see men, and hear the sound of words, but

* Psal. lxxvii. 13. 14.

to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. Do you desire to behold the majesty of the Lord, and enjoy the pleasures of communion? cast yourselves in his way, and walk in his ordinances and commandments, remembering that he is the God who doth wonders. In the *world* live godly, and do your business with men of the world as persons professing godliness in a godly manner. Faith in God, love to him, and fear of him, are operative principles of obedience, which extend themselves the whole length of the commandment. Never dissemble their influence upon your words and actions. There are swine before whom wisdom forbids us to cast our pearls, and sons of Belial, to whom prudence advises us not to speak; but we ought not to be ashamed to be known among the worst men, to be lovers, and fearers, and worshippers of God. God is not ashamed to be called our God in the face of the world, and we should not be ashamed to be known in it to be his peculiar people. To men who loved vanity, and followed falsehood, and turned the glory of David into shame, he said with a bold countenance, and in a smart and noble turn of expression: *But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly, for himself**. In the ordinary business of your stations, and in markets, and fairs, and at sales, consider yourselves as acting under the authority of the Lord your God and Redeemer in the eighth commandment; and depend upon his promises for wisdom, discretion, and strength to do your business well. If it prosper, ascribe to him the honour of success; and if it disappoint expectation, turn the loss into gain, by acknowledging the justice of Providence; submitting to the will of God in trying, chastising, and humbling you, and adoring his sovereignty, in chusing means of weaning you from earth, and fitting you for heaven.

* Psal. iv. 2. 3.

Now,

Now, Believers, ye see how ye ought to live. In this present world, ye ought to live soberly, righteously, and godly. To this manner of life ye are bound. For this manner of life ye are furnished. In this manner of life ye will find pleasure. And from men of your persuasion and calling, this manner of life is expected.

To this manner of life ye are bound. With the gospel of the grace of God, which is the charter of your privileges, the law of God, which is the rule of your conduct, is embodied. In the dispensation of his grace the commandments and statutes of his law are in force, and bind his beloved and redeemed people to order their conversations, and frame their lives in the manner that he has prescribed and revealed. Under this law ye acknowledge yourselves to live; and by the authority of it, which in the administration of Christ is light and easy, ye are bound to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God. As ye walk forward in holiness, humility, and righteousness, be sensible of the obligation and of the vigour imparted to it, by gratitude for love, and grace, and redemption. *Ye are not your own: For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's**. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light†. Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works‡.

For this manner of life ye are furnished; furnished with life. *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*||. You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses

* 1 Cor. vi. 19 20.

† 1 Pet. ii. 9.

‡ Tit. ii. 14.

|| Gal. ii. 20.

and sins *. Furnished with power : All things are possible to him that believeth †. I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me ‡. Furnished with liberty : Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead, wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter ||. Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness **. Furnished with a rule : All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works ††. Furnished with an unction : Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things ‡‡. Now he who stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God : Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts |||. Furnished with examples : Christ hath left us an example of obedience, in fulfilling all righteousness, as well as of patience in suffering the death of the cross; and we are instructed to observe the patterns of faith and holiness, which appear in the lives of prophets and apostles, to consider the end of their conversations, and to follow them as they were followers of Christ.

In this manner of life ye will find pleasure and joy. Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding; behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. The ways of this wisdom are pleasantness, and all the paths are peace. On the right hand is joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom ye have now received the atonement; and on the left, peace of conscience, and confidence before men. *The work of righteousness shall be peace,*

* Eph. ii. 1.

† Mark, ix. 23.

‡ Phil. iv. 13.

|| Rom. vii. 6.

** Rom. vi. 18.

†† 2 Tim. iii. 16. 17.

‡‡ 1 John, ii. 20.

||| 2 Cor. i. 21. 22.

and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever *. *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world* †. The way of holiness, though hedged with thorns, and infested with leopards; though lying through deep mire, and great tribulation, leads into green pastures, sweeps along the banks of the river of God, runs over mountains of myrrh, and hills of frankincense, passes through the dead sea, and ends in fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life ‡. Pleasures found in a life of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, are not like the withering joys which flutter the hearts of men of the world, in corn, and wine, and oil. In summer and in winter, and at all seasons of the year, the pleasures of religion are fresh and green. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish* §.

From men of your persuasion and calling, this manner of life is expected. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, or the doctrine of God

* Isa. xxxii. 17.

† 2 Cor. i. 12.

‡ Rom. vi. 22.

§ Psal. i. 1.—6.

our Saviour, is your faith. This holy doctrine you have embraced from conviction, and believe it to be the truth which is after godliness. Saved and called with an holy calling, not according to your works, but according to the purpose of God, and the grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, ye are persuaded that the record of God is true, and worthy of all acceptance. These things being so, it is expected, that by a life of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, you should do honour to your persuasion and calling. This expectation is reasonable and universal. The church expects it as a mean of edification and comfort. The world expect it; and though these be enemies of the grace of God, common reason in them dictates, that men should live according to their profession, and form their conduct according to their principles. *Let us then walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance: But as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation †. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness ‡.*

From the manner of life which we have explained and recommended, many are alienated through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, and the vanity of their mind. The flesh hath both its lusts and its religion. There is a service performed in oldness of the letter, and a service performed in newness of spirit. Men in the flesh, though dead in sin, may escape pollutions which are in the world through lust, at-

* Rom. xiii. 13. 14.

† 1 Pet. i. 14. 15.

‡ 1 Theff. iv. 7.

tain knowledge of truth, consent to words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and do works which ought to be done, and which are worthy of praise; but till they be dead to the law, and married to Christ, they are under the curse, and cannot please God. In their conversations, are shews and appearances of virtue and good works, according to the oldness of the letter; but there is no true holiness or acceptable obedience in newness of spirit. Union with the Lord Jesus Christ, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, is the entrance into life, and righteousness, and holiness. This gate of the Lord, at which all that are in entered, is opened by the Scripture, and in the dispensation of the gospel of the grace of God, calls to seek directions to find; and invitations and encouragements to enter are given to the world, according to the commandment of the everlasting God: *I am the way, ye know who is speaking, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture†. Enter in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be who find it‡. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they who keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man who heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he who sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they who hate me, love death||.*

* John, xiv. 6. † John, x. 9. ‡ Matt. vii. 13. 14.
 || Prov. viii. 31.—36.

S E R M O N IX.

TITUS, ii. 12.

Teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

THE beauties in a good life, though of little account in the sight of men, are of great account in the sight of God, the supreme judge of beauty. Sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, diffuse around people a lustre which outshines ornaments and jewels. In the wardrobe of Solomon, there was nothing comparable to these; and nothing that equals them appears among the lilies of the field, which eclipse the glory of Solomon. A daughter of Zion, in the finery condemned by Isaiah, and a Roman lady in the costly array censured by Peter and Paul, look ugly, if sobriety, righteousness, and godliness be wanting. *As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman who is without discretion* *.

In a good life these beauties appear all, and none of them is wanting. A character of sobriety without righteousness and godliness, or of righteousness without godliness and sobriety, or of godliness without sobriety and righteousness, is not a beauty in the eyes of the Lord. In some characters, sobriety is wanting; in some, righteousness cannot be seen;

* Prov. xi. 22.

and in some, godliness doth not shine : but in a good life, the whole constellation breaks forth, and diffuses light and beauty through the conversation.

The gospel of the grace of God, having in the bosom of its dispensation the law of Christ, sits in his temple, declaiming with authority in the ears of men, against lust, impiety, and immorality, and teaching hearers and believers to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. After what you have heard, of denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and of living soberly, righteously, and godly, it is now proposed to set forth the teaching and binding authority, which is in the dispensation of this grace.

The authority in the dispensation of this grace, we shall consider,—first, As it raises its voice against lust, impiety, and immorality ; — and secondly, As it inculcates upon hearers and believers, sobriety, righteousness, and godliness.

Against lust, impiety, and immorality, the dispensation of the gospel of the grace of God, which bringeth before the world salvation through the righteousness of faith without works, speaks aloud, and cries in the ear of the world, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity* *. Particularly, *first*, Sin, the evil which is the cause of every other evil, is represented by the dispensation of this grace, in terms which are the most proper to express the malignity of its nature. Transgression, disobedience, and rebellion ; lewdness, filthiness, and uncleanness ; iniquity, trespass, and offence ; wickedness, ungodliness, and unrighteousness ; and many other terms, are used among the holy writers, to teach men the knowledge of sin, and to convince them that it is an only evil. The beauty of holiness, and the vileness of sin, every where contrast each other in Scripture ; and by the

* 2 Tim. ii. 19.

lustre and glory of the former, the filthiness of the latter appears viler and more shocking. Job, when he had seen, with the eye, the majesty of the Lord, abhorred himself, and cried, Behold, I am vile. When the glory of the Lord, in a vision, shined round about Isaiah, that holy man saw himself to be a man of unclean lips. When Ezra thought of the habitation of holiness, he blushed, and could not look up. Awful ceremonies, prefiguring the expiation of sin, were instituted to impress upon the conscience a sense of its nature and demerit. Slaughtering oxen, and burning lambs, and sprinkling blood, were a solemn and awful introduction to the more dreadful scene that was to appear in Gethsemane, and on Calvary. When sin and wrath met together upon the Son of God, the nature of sin, and the power of wrath, appeared in a light in which they never had been manifested before. The waters of Noah, the flames of Sodom, the plagues of Egypt, the ruins of Babylon, the ashes of Jerusalem, the dust of the temple, and the rubbish of Zion, are monuments of the wrath of God against the sin of the world; but the cross, where wrath kindled upon his beloved Son, melted his heart like wax, in the midst of his bowels, dried his body like a potsherd, and wrung from his holy lips, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*, is the tremendous and fiery monument to which the gospel of the grace of God directs the eye for a sight of the nature of sin and the power of wrath. Look at it, O believers! and weep bitterly. Is there an odious name which ye are not inclined to give this evil and bitter thing, that brought the Holy One and the Just to the infamy of the cross, and the humiliation of the grave?

Secondly, In the dispensation of this grace, loud calls are given to repentance; and the object whom God hath exalted to bestow it, is revealed. *The*
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God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour; for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins *. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord †. No encouragement is given to continue in sin, that grace may abound. On the contrary, the abounding of grace, and the promises of pardon, are the cords with which the loving-kindness of God our Saviour draws sinners from the pleasures of sin, to the love and practice of holiness. Let the wicked forsake, not continue in, his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon ‡. In this holy dispensation, the nature and demerit of sin are not only represented to the eye, but exhortations, calls, and commands to repent, and turn from it, are addressed to the ear, and to the heart. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. God commandeth all men every where to repent. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; Cease to do evil; Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,—are voices daily uttered in the dispensation of the gospel, and with a clear and strong emphasis express the opposition of grace to impiety, lust, and licentiousness.

Thirdly, The statutes of the Lawgiver against lust, impiety, and immorality are all in force, and, in the dispensation of this grace, proclaimed with every solemnity. All iniquity is not simply prohibited as offensive to the holiness of God, and a trespass against his government. Heavy and eternal penalties are denounced, and certifications

* Acts, v. 30. 31.

† Acts, iii. 19.

‡ Is. lv. 7.

given that these will be inflicted: *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die* *. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die* †. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them* ‡. *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men* ||. *He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him* **. *He that believeth not, shall be damned* ††. The righteousness of the law being fulfilled by Christ, is fulfilled in all who believe in Christ. Redeemed from the curse, and delivered from the law, there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Against their state in Christ Jesus, these penalties have no force, and never will be inflicted: *Verily verily I say unto you, He that beareth my word, and believeth on him who sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation* ‡‡. The penalties, notwithstanding, render many essential services to believers in striving against sin. By these, their zeal against it is heated and kindled into indignation; by these, their consciences are awed and alarmed at the approach of temptation; and by these their hands are tied up from working iniquity, and their feet restrained from going in among dissemblers and evil-doers: *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence:*

* Gen. ii. 17.

† Ezek. xviii. 20.

‡ Gal. iii. 10.

|| Rom. i. 18.

** John, iii. 36.

†† Mark, xvi. 16.

‡‡ John, v. 24.

*thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver *.* To deter men from imbibing impious opinions, and from persisting in immoral courses, the terrors of judgement and eternity are held up before them with awful and pointed solemnity: *God will render to every man according to his deeds:—unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation, and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil,—in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ †. Who shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power ‡.*

Fourthly, Motives to deny and mortify sin, are laid before believers in the dispensation of this grace. The commission of sin is not only strictly prohibited, but every motive to take up arms and fight against it, is used without scruple and without exception. The contrariety of sin to the holiness of God, the unreasonableness of disobedience, the infamy of vice, the stings of conscience, the bitterness of death, the terror of judgement, and the torments and anguish of eternity, have a place in the doctrine of God our Saviour; and with all their force, urge believers of it to take up arms against impiety and unrighteousness. Besides these, there are motives of a higher order and peculiar to this holy doctrine. Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. How shall

* Psal. l. 16.—21.

† Rom. ii. 6. 8. 9. 16.

‡ 2 Thess. i. 7. 8. 9.

we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. We are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.—These transcendent motives to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to resist and mortify the dying remains of sin, and to abstain from all appearance of evil, the gospel of the grace of God presses upon hearers and believers; and with the consolation of redemption, and the force of gratitude to the Redeemer, encourages them to continue the war against the whole body of sin until it be destroyed.

Fifthly, Striving against sin with the vigour of these motives, is bound upon us by the authority of the Lawgiver. Though dead by the body of Christ to the covenant of the law, we are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. By this law, war against ungodly, worldly, and fleshly lusts is authorised, and all commerce with these enemies is prohibited and cut off. The sword is drawn, and must not be sheathed until the whole body of sin be destroyed. In this holy war, hostilities are enjoined by the Captain of our salvation, and must be committed without mercy, and without listening to overtures of accommodation, or any terms the enemy can propose: *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

hell. *And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell* *. Behold the rancour and animosity of a veteran, who, under the banner of the cross, assured himself of victory and conquest: *So fight I, not as one who beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway* †. And hear his complaints when like to be taken prisoner: *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin* ‡.

Sixthly, In the conflict with the remains of sin, we are furnished, by the dispensation of this grace, with the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit. The mortification of our members which are upon the earth is our duty, and in the word of God is frequently and earnestly recommended. To perform this necessary and reasonable duty we have no strength of our own. Of ourselves, none of us are sufficient to deny an evil propensity, to correct a bad habit, nor to take the life of an ungodly lust. But for this extremity provision is made in the dispensation of grace. Mortification, a work which is bound upon men without strength, is performed through the power of the Holy Spirit: *If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live* ||. No vicious habit is so inveterate, no lust is so outrageous, no member of the body of sin is so strong, but a man who has no might, will, through

* Matth. v. 29. 30.

† 1 Cor. ix. 26. 27.

‡ Rom. vii. 23. 24. 25.

|| Rom. viii. 13.

his divine power, overcome and destroy. Now let these particulars be seriously considered—the representations, in the dispensation of this grace, of the nature of sin and the power of wrath; the calls to repentance, and the discoveries of the Saviour who is exalted to give it; the statutes of the Lawgiver against iniquity, and the certifications that the penalties will be inflicted; the motives to lift arms and fight against sin; the authority of Christ, which binds us to resist it in the use of these motives; and the effectual provision made by the promise and communication of the Spirit, to enable believers, who have no might, to subdue and destroy the whole body of sin—and reason, common reason, will be compelled to acknowledge, that grace gives no encouragement to unrighteousness; that the dispensation of it hath not an immoral tendency; and that it exerts, and will continue to exert itself in believers, till the whole body of sin be destroyed.

The dispensation of this grace raises its voice, not only against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, but pleads strongly, and earnestly, and triumphantly, for righteousness and godliness among men. Lust, impiety, and immorality are strictly prohibited; and sobriety, righteousness, and godliness are strongly inculcated, within the realm over which grace reigns. Having heard what it hath advanced against the former, we will now listen to what it hath to say in favour of the latter. And,

First, In the gospel of the grace of God, which takes into its dispensation the law of Christ, the beauties of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness are delineated. This is of great consideration to manners. In moral imitations it is necessary to have before our eye the original of beauty and excellence. The gospel of the grace of God provides this, and in the face of Jesus Christ, sets before us the holiness of God in all its beauty and glory. Upon this

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glorious original, the holy apostles and prophets fixed their eye, in painting 'the beauty of holiness, and recommending it to the imitation of believers. Turn to these expressions of likeness to God which appear in the dispensation of his grace, and behold a representation of all that is virtuous and worthy of praise. Among the refinements of Paganism, some good sayings are found, and some wise rules for regulating *part* of our conversation are prescribed; but the doctrine of God our Saviour, or the dispensation of his grace, and of salvation through his righteousness and blood, without works of the law, sets before the world a *whole*; a whole with respect to ourselves, a whole with respect to our neighbour, and a whole with respect to our God.

Secondly, This gracious and holy dispensation, in which grace reigns and bestows salvation without works, binds to imitations of the original; and *enjoins* believers to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. The glorious original of the beauty and perfection of holiness is set before us; and precept is added to precept, and call to call, to imitate him, and to be perfect, even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect: *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour* *. Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification †. In the dispensation of this grace, which bringeth salvation without works, holiness, the perfection of beauty, is set before us, instruction to imitations of it in our conduct is com-

* Eph. v. 1. 2.

† 1 Thess. iv. 1. 2 3

municated,

municated, and authority is interposed to bind us to receive instruction in righteousness. Is the authority of the Creator and Preserver of men acknowledged, and the authority of the Redeemer and Saviour of men hissed. Creation and redemption, salvation and preservation, are operations of the same Sovereign. Under the reign of grace through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord, the authority of our Creator, and the authority of our Redeemer meet together, and with concentrated force bind receivers of the grace of God to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Higaion, Selah. Alleluia!

Thirdly, The dispensation of this grace provides for the life which it recommends, and to which it binds. To live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, believers are thoroughly furnished, furnished with precepts and rules, with privileges and promises, with examples and motives, and with hopes and rewards: *Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently* *. *As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God* †. *As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy* ‡. *I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy* ||. *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God* **. *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God* ††. *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ* ‡‡. *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*

* Psal. cxix. 4.

† Gal. vi. 16.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 15. 16.

|| Lev. xi. 45.

** Gal. ii. 19.

†† Rom. vii. 4.

‡‡ 1 Cor. xi. 1.

Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them who walk so, as ye have us for an ensample†. He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not‡. According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness: In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began||. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them**. This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people††. Here is provision of every sort. Statutes and rules, privileges and promises, examples and motives, hopes and rewards, are provided, with a new heart and a new spirit: Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God‡‡.*

Fourthly, The grace or doctrine of God our Saviour takes up the motive of redemption through his blood, and with holy energy urges the redeemed to serve the Lord, who died for them and rose again, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. *What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body,*

* 1 Cor. iv. 15. 16. † Philip. iii. 17. ‡ Gal. vi. 8. 9.

|| Tit. i. 1. 2. ** Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 27. †† Jer. xxxi. 33.

‡‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

and in your spirit, which are God's*. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works†. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish‡. The holy writers never forget to mention this ingenuous motive, and among the saints, always insist upon it with warmth and fervour. Shall we continue in sin, we whom Christ hath redeemed from the curse, redeemed from all iniquity, and redeemed unto God by his own blood? God forbid: It is absurd to suppose, that any who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, will. The absurdity exposes and confutes itself. How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein. Delivered out of the hands of our enemies, and saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, we will serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. To this we are constrained by the love of Christ: to this we are bound by the law of Christ: and to this we are directed by his word, drawn by his example, and led by his Holy Spirit.

Fifthly, Under the reign of grace, we are anointed, and sealed with the spirit of holiness. By the hearing of faith, and not by the works of the law, the Spirit is received; and by his divine power believers are prepared and furnished unto all good works. Without the unction from the Holy One, we can do nothing that is holy and well-pleasing to God. But, strengthened with all might in the in-

* 1 Cor. vi. 19. 20.

† Tit. ii. 13. 14.

‡ Eph. v. 25. 26. 27.

ner man, according to his glorious power, there is no good work which may not be done acceptably and easily by them who have no might of their own. The operations of the Spirit, on the sanctification of the church, have been blasphemed by some moral teachers, and suppressed by others. Insensible of spiritual and gracious operations in themselves, and heated to indignation against the experience of sober and heavenly men, *the former* make a great noise, and roar widely and indiscriminately against the indiscretions of the weak, and the excesses of the wicked. Dispassionate and cool, *the latter* content themselves with reasoning in measured and nervous periods, against the insolence and penal consequences of vice and impiety, and in favour of the merit and excellence of religion and virtue. But in opposition to the falsehood and bitterness of the indignant and fiery declaimer, who, though he spares the names of prophets and apostles, traduces, as fanaticism, the operations of the Holy Spirit, described in their writings; and in opposition to the smoothness and artifice of the cool and polite reasoner, who, though he refrain his lips from speaking despitefully of the Spirit of grace, conceals his operation and influence; we profess boldly, and in the face of the world, that the Spirit of Truth, with whom we are anointed, and by whom we are sealed, is the author and finisher of every good and perfect work; that in this present world we live soberly, righteously, and godly, by his holy influence; that victories over the remains of our inherent enemy, are obtained by his glorious arm; and that the rivers of living water, which break out and overflow our exercise and conduct, and, under our tribulations and sufferings, refresh our souls in this dry and thirsty land, are his divine and gracious consolations. Now, when it is considered, that in the dispensation, and under the reign
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of grace, the original of the beauties of holiness appears in his glory in the face of Jesus Christ; that imitations of him in holiness and righteousness, are bound upon us by the law of Christ; that provision is made for improving and perfecting these holy imitations; that within the realm of grace the motive of redemption has free course in all its energy; and that receivers of grace are anointed and sealed with the Spirit of Truth and Holiness; reason, unless it be perverted, will confess, that the grace or doctrine of God our Saviour encourages the growth of piety toward God, and righteousness toward men, waters the root of these holy plants, and at last raises them to maturity.

From the description in the text, of the grace of God, or the doctrine of God our Saviour, and the explication we have given of its nature and design, the following inferences will be obvious, and to those who have their minds enlightened to discern truth and error, will appear to be of great importance.

First, The grace of God, which bringeth salvation without works, lifts up a standard against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. So far is it from alluring to licentiousness, and encouraging to continue in sin, that it encounters every lust as an enemy, and arms us to resist, and to destroy, and to exterminate, and root out the whole body of sin. To this standard believers assemble in the day of power, and time of love; and from the Captain of salvation, who is upon their head, receive arms and instructions, and inclinations, and laws, to stand fast in one spirit, and to strive together for the faith of the gospel, in nothing terrified by its adversaries. Nor can they correspond with the enemy, without breaking their faith, deserting their colours, and exposing themselves to rods and lashes.

If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgements;

judgements; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes *. Since the breaking out of the rebellion in paradise, light and darkness, truth and error, sin and holiness, righteousness and unrighteousness, have contended for dominion. In the heart of every holy believer, the contest is hot and violent. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these two are contrary the one to the other* †. Grace doth not stand neuter, nor trim, between contending powers. All its force is exerted for the destruction of sin, and the triumph of righteousness; nor is the issue of the conflict doubtful. *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord* ‡.

Secondly, The dispensation of this grace lifts servants of sin into the service of righteousness, promises life, and strength, and spirit, to perform it; and in performing it, acceptance and reward. After entering into this service, the service of sin is strictly prohibited, and sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, every where, and every day, are peremptorily required from all the servants. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniqui-

* Psal. lxxxix. 30. 31. 32.

† Gal. v. 17.

‡ Rom. v. 20. 21.

ty, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*. After reading, and hearing, and considering this solemn address, which follows a demonstration of justification before God by faith without works, and with so much evidence and warmth represents the nature and tendency of the doctrine of God our Saviour, reason, if unbiassed, will acknowledge that this doctrine is the truth which is after godliness, or the doctrine which is according to godliness.

Thirdly, The grace of God, and the law of Christ, have a place assigned to each of them in the dispensation of the glorious gospel. This holy dispensation, which bringeth salvation without works to perishing and lost sinners, is neither grace without law, nor law without grace. Through the whole administration grace reigns, and the law binds. Grace reigns, and in acceptance with God will not suffer works of the law to come near the throne. The law binds, and in sanctification commands all who are under grace to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. In the dispensation of the gospel, however, law and grace are not one confused mass, without distinction, and without order. Each hath its place, its jurisdiction, influence, and operation. By grace, without deeds of the law, or works of righteousness which we have done, we are justified and saved. Under law to Christ in sanctification, we work out our own

* Rom. vi. 16.—23.

salvation with fear and trembling, acknowledging that God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Under the law, and under grace, alive to the law, and dead to the law, held by the law, and delivered from the law, of the works of the law, and of the faith of Christ, are modes of expression used and consecrated by the wisdom and accuracy of inspiration. Men who reckon themselves wise enough to adjust the words of the living God by their own standard, neither understand the meaning, nor discern the propriety and beauty of these holy expressions, and smile at the ignorance and folly of building faith upon a foundation of Greek propositions and Jewish metaphors. *But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus**. Christ was made under the law of works, and fulfilled all that it demanded. The penalty lays nothing to your charge; for from the curse he hath redeemed you. The precept asks nothing of you; for he hath fulfilled the righteousness which it requires. Under this law you some time were; but from this law you are now delivered. To this law you were alive once; but to this law you are at present dead. By this law you were formerly held in bondage; but from this law the Son hath made you free indeed. *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid†. We are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ‡.* Grace, which delivers us from the dominion of the law as a covenant, places us under the authority of the law as a rule. In this new state we are both under grace and under law, and by grace strengthened with all might, to observe the statutes of the

* Eph. iv. 20. 21.

† Rom. vi. 15.

‡ 1 Cor. ix. 21.

law, *not in oldness of the letter, but in newness of spirit* *.

Fourthly, Godliness and righteousness both appear in good conversations. In some conversations godliness is wanting; and in others righteousness is wanting. Temperance and sobriety, meekness and humanity, justice and honesty, and charity, adorn the tempers and manners of some men, and merit the esteem, and confidence, and praise of society; but godliness appears not among them. Their Creator and Redeemer is forgotten in the closet, in the family, and in the temple. They do not read his word, nor believe his gospel, nor observe the statutes of his law, which bind us to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known. They have no delight in his excellencies; no zeal for the honour of his name; no desires of communion with him; and no veneration for the day which he hath set apart for himself, and commanded all to remember and keep holy. In the conversations of men of another description, righteousness is wanting, and truth is held in unrighteousness. With the law of works, and the law of faith, they are acquainted. Upon the difference between do and live, and live and do; or between entering into life by works of righteousness of our own doing, and entering into it through the righteousness of faith without works, they speak sensibly and accurately according to Scripture. The depravity, and misery, and impotence of sinners under the law, are acknowledged; and toward justification through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, and some other distinguishing and reigning doctrines of the grace of God, they are zealously affected. With respect unto the will of God in the first table of the law, the glory of his perfections, the ordinances of his worship, the veneration

* Rom. vii. 6.

tion of his name, and the observation of his day, they appear holy and unblameable, and unreprouable in the sight of men. But when we go along and follow them into the second table of the law, we do not behold the fruit of the Spirit, in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. Through this wide field of obedience unto righteousness, the doctrine of God our Saviour hath no operation upon their temper and conduct. Love to this world, its rival, is the reigning affection of the heart, and in possession of the throne. Gold is the god which is worshipped; and to support and enrich the temple of this shining idol, the work of faith is turned into wormwood, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock. *They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows* *. The appearance of religion in each of these classes is false and deceitful. Partiality in obedience is an affront to the lawgiver, and an impious attempt to compound, and oblige him to accept the one half of what he requires. But in conversations which are ordered aright, godliness and righteousness appear and shine, and like two great lights mingling their beams, increase the splendor of grace, and compel men to acknowledge, that God, who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all, is in the gospel of a truth.

Fifthly, Neither the pollutions which defile the world through the lusts of men, nor the running issues which break out in the lives of believers of the gospel, are effects of the doctrine and reign of grace. This doctrine enlightens the eyes of the understanding, and discovers and corrects every false

* 1 Tim. vi. 9. 10.

and heretical opinion, which is contrary to the simplicity of truth and the purity of manners. It forms and directs the resolutions of the will, and brings these into captivity to the obedience of Christ. - It purifies the desires of the affections, takes the heart off the things of this world, and creates and raises inclinations and motions toward things holy, spiritual, and heavenly. It regulates the passions, and restrains those different excesses, to which different persons by constitution or habit are inclined. It teaches, binds, and enables all who believe it with the heart, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. This is its tendency; and from Scripture we are sure, that those who receive it unfeignedly, will, by their lives and conversations, demonstrate it to be the doctrine which is according to godliness. Notwithstanding it is not, and it cannot be denied, that where-ever this doctrine hath prevailed, sin hath abounded. Scandalous impurities have dishonoured societies and congregations among whom it hath been maintained in theory; and upon the garments and conversations of the small remnant who received and obeyed it from the heart, a multitude of black and ugly spots have appeared. But while we condemn these impurities and blemishes, we justify the doctrine of the grace of God from the charge of being the cause of disorders and impurities of any kind. In the golden age of Christianity such offences abounded. Among churches and congregations where apostles preached for justification, Christ the righteousness of God, and for sanctification, Christ the power of God, there were enemies of the cross of Christ, and Christians who, by their tempers and their crimes, dishonoured the name of Christianity. Scandalous indecencies at the solemnities of Christian worship, debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, and swellings,

swellings, tumults, heresies, schisms, uncleanness, fornication, lasciviousness, vexations, and litigations at law, covetousness, fraud, deceit, idleness, broke in like a high sea, overflowed places where salvation without works was preached through Christ and him crucified, and drowned thousands in destruction and perdition. But because the floods of ungodliness never would have swelled unto such a monstrous height, nor made such horrid noise with their waves, if Christ had not been preached to the world, it is against Scripture, against reason and common sense, to say, that this swell of ungodly and worldly lusts is a necessary effect of the doctrine of the cross of Christ, and salvation without works through his grace and name. And if the same doctrine be preached, the complaints of its immoral tendency, so loudly reverberated in the ears of its friends, and attempted to be proved only by the lusts and abuses of some evil men who hear and profess to admire it, are unjust, and fall upon the apostles and the Son of God himself.

Sixthly, The doctrine of the grace of God ought not to be dissembled nor corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, because it is abused by the ignorance and lusts of foolish men. Here the wise and prudent have erred exceedingly, and spoken and written very unwisely and imprudently. Observing that under the doctrine and reign of grace sin abounds, and hastily and unreasonably supposing this to be the effect, some of them have dissembled and concealed the reign of grace in salvation; others have associated with it in the throne, sincere obedience and works of the law; and a third sort have forsaken it as impious and absurd, and sunk themselves into preachers of rational Christianity, imagining that our blessed Lord and Saviour was of this sect. But men set for the defence of the gospel were in nothing terrified by adversaries.

When

When ungodliness came in like a flood, and worldly lusts swept away thousands who gloried in shame, and minded earthly things, apostles stood firm and upright by the cross of Christ, and resisted the swell of immorality, and the force of lust, with the grace of God, which taught them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Paul, who had left Titus in a little infamous island, where the god of this world reigned over liars, evil beasts, and flow-bellies; and by Jewish fables and commandments of men, by contentions and strivings about the law, and by foolish questions and endless genealogies, raised daily commotions; commands that young teacher to affirm constantly, salvation, not by works of righteousness which we do, but through the kindness, mercy, and love of God our Saviour, by washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; that being justified by his grace, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, we might be careful to maintain good works. The same zealous and aged father, knowing immorality to be the fruit of heresy, enjoins his son, after the common faith, to speak things which become sound doctrine, to rebuke sharply and with all authority the immoral, that they may be found in the faith, and to reject an heretic after the first and second admonition.

Unto these instructions and inferences, we shall add two general exhortations. And, *First*, We exhort you who have received the grace of God in deed and in truth, to adorn and commend it, by denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and by living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Where this grace is faithfully preached and cordially received, there always will be some who by well-doing are able to put to silence the ignorance

rance of foolish men. But among the numbers who are forming and training up in the same principles, and who in their hearts are well affected to Christ and him crucified, there are likewise some whose conduct in many respects is liable to censure. Instances you have heard or observed of persons visibly declining and sliding out of the paths of righteousness; and you yourselves are conscious of being incumbered with sinful natures, of walking amidst temptations and snares, and of being surrounded with evil spirits, who, upon sudden and new emergencies, have unknown ways of surprising and hurrying us into action before we have time to deliberate. Now them who are in such circumstances, we exhort to walk circumspectly; and before God and before men, to behave themselves holily, and justly, and unblameably.

Little children, the adversaries of the doctrine of grace are both watchful and wicked; and will not only aggravate, but charge as consequences of this doctrine, all our indiscretions and miscarriages in life and manners. This calls upon us to double the guards upon our conduct, and with David, to pray to be led in the way of righteousness, because of observers. For the infirmities, and even the vices of men who discover no love to the person of Christ, nor attachment to his doctrine, allowances are freely and largely made by the world, and none are willing to be thought harsh or censorious. But the believers and professors of the truth which is after godliness, need look for no extenuation from this quarter. Even professed admirers of candour and charity will not hesitate to put the worst construction on all we say or do amiss, because they are seeking occasion to defame the grace of God, and to harden the world against it by our misconduct.

Beloved, I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil, and wish to see

see your obedience unto righteousness come abroad unto all men. In order to this, I exhort to stand firm and upright by the doctrine of the grace of God all the days of your life. Whatever imperfections and inaccuracies be in the manner of our preaching, we know, and do testify, that the text from which we have preached is the true grace of God wherein ye ought to stand. The worst heresy in the church is a wicked life; but the source of this heresy is an evil heart of unbelief, and an unsettled and erroneous judgement of the faith of the gospel. Errors and heresies, in whatever degree these prevail, have a poisonous and deadly effect upon morals. Some dissolve the whole frame of obedience to our God and Saviour, and encourage the vilest and most licentious indulgences; and the more refined and plausible deliver the soul into the power of some besetting and beloved sin, and furnish arguments and arms to defend and save its life. Would you be not only really but eminently holy, you must take heed to your principles, stand fast in the Lord our righteousness and strength, and continue sound in the faith. If a man's life be according to the law, it is no matter what his principles are concerning the gospel, though a common, is a false and dangerous position. It supposes a person to be as sincere in believing falsehood as in believing truth; truth to be no more acceptable to God than falsehood; and falsehood to have as good influence upon morals as truth. The influence of soundness in the faith upon holiness of life, appears in the exhortations of the apostles. In recommending Christian manners, these holy writers never depart from the doctrine and reign of grace; and out of the wells of salvation, and from the springs of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, draw that living water or vital influence which refreshes languishing saints, and causes withering churches

to revive as the corn, grow as the vine, blossom as the rose, and fill the face of the world with fruit: *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel**. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power†. As you know, how we exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father doth his children) that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe‡. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour§. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another**. Faithful to the trust committed unto them, the same ardent and holy men represent heresy as a source of immorality, and warn the churches against endangering the life of

* Phil. i. 27.

† Col. ii. 6.—10.

‡ 1 Thess. ii. 11. 12. 13.

§ E. h. v. 1. 2.

** 1 John. iv. 10. 11.

holiness with water from this impure and poisonous fountain. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some†. Beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts‡.

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profession Christ Jesus. On each side of the way of holiness flows the river of his blood, which washes scarlet as white as new-fallen snow, and crimson as clean as unstained wool. To his most precious blood every wayfaring man who sinneth against God, hath access as on this side, and every one who offends against man hath access as on that side. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we confess our sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous||. You are sensible of much inherent depravity, and cannot compute the number of your iniquities. The errors and wanderings of every day are more than you are able to understand and set in order before the Lord. But how many days soever you

* Rom. xvi. 17. 18.

† 2 Tim. ii. 17. 18.

‡ Jude, 17. 18.

|| 1 John, i. 7. 9.; ii. 1.

have strayed, whatever lengths you have gone in defection, in whatever filthy places you have mired yourselves, and whatever stains be upon your garments and conversations, there is access to the holy river, which runs along each side of the way of God's commandments; and, O! be persuaded to follow the footsteps of men who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Be serious, and make haste. Turn your feet unto the testimonies of the Lord, and turn without delay; for ye who are as sheep going astray are this day commanded to return unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Secondly, You who have received the grace of God only in word and in tongue, we exhort to believe and obey it from the heart. Knowledge of the truth is a necessary and precious attainment; but upon the hearts and lives of many who are enlightened, the truth which is after godliness hath not gracious operations, and produceth no effects that are spiritual and holy. A form of godliness may be reared up to a considerable height upon illumination and knowledge; but a spiritual birth, or a new creation in Christ Jesus, by the word and spirit of truth, is the ground on which the power of it stands. *Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures* *. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them* †. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—Verily verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God* ‡. Through education and example, through habit and temperament of body, through

* James, i. 18.

† Eph. ii. 10.

‡ John, iii. 3. 5.

rational considerations of happiness and misery, through deference to established forms, and peace and order in society, through desire of fame and vain glory, and through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, men in the flesh may escape pollutions which reign in the world through lust, and white-wash and paint the outside of the conversation, while the dominion of sin stands firm in the heart. *Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity* *. But men in the flesh cannot please God, and never rise higher in obedience than serving in oldness of the letter. *For he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God* †. Sin reigning in the heart is a stronger and more imperious power than the king reigning over all the children of pride in the water. A child may amuse himself with the thoughts of hooking leviathan by the nose, drawing him out with a line, boring through his jaw with a thorn, and playing with him as with a bird. Years are his apology: he understands, and thinks, and speaks as a child. But men of penetration and learning, who think, with the Bible before them, that sin may be turned out of the heart, righteousness brought in, and the power of godliness established, without being born again by the Word and Spirit of God, are weaker in understanding than children. Upon the doctrine of the Pharisees, Paul attempted it; but when the commandment

* Matt. xxiii. 27. 28.

† Rom. ii. 28. 29.

came, and sin revived, he abandoned the enterprise, fevered, and died. *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whether it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit* *. The workmanship of God in the creation and birth of the new man, is incomprehensible; but the doctrine of grace is the glorious instrument, by which his power is exerted, and with which his operations are performed. *Being born again of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever* †. How beautiful is the new creature in Christ Jesus! In every part, the impression of the finger of God is discernible; and what a striking contrast is it to the old man? The errors of the old man, systematised by Arminians, are exposed, displaced, and renounced; and truths revealed and taught by the Spirit of God, are introduced into the understanding, and from his glorious power, receive the vigour of ruling principles, which give law to the members of the animal body, and to the powers of the reasonable soul.

Since the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, is the instrument of his power and love in the new creation in Christ Jesus, we beseech you that ye receive not this grace in vain. It is come to you in word, and ye have received it in word; but it comes and is received without effect pertaining to salvation, until it come and be received in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. O hearer of the grace of God, let tears run down like a river, day and night, give thyself no rest, let not the apple of thine eye cease; arise, cry out in the night, in the beginning of the watches, pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord, lift up thy hands toward him for the life of

* John, iii. 7. 8.

† 1 Pet. i. 23.

thy soul, which is ready to perish. With knowledge of the truth thou art enlightened; but except the soul be purified in obeying the truth through the Spirit, it will die in the pit, and never behold the face of God in righteousness, nor be satisfied with his likeness.

F I N I S.

my soul, which is ready to perish. With know-
ledge of the truth, I am not enlightened; but ex-
cept the Lord be pleased to obeying the truth
through the Spirit, I am in the pit and never
shall see the face of God. I am not
pleased with his likeness.

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